TRANSLATION

OF

THE HOLY QURAN

with short notes and Introduction

by

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THE HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER 1

AL-FÂTIHAH: THE OPENING

(Mecca—7 verses)

Al-Fátihah or *Fátihat-ul-Kitáb* contains seven verses in a single section, and was revealed at Mecca, being without doubt one of the earliest revelations. Muir, who divides the whole of the Meccan revelation into five periods, places it in the first period—though he is mistaken in placing it before even the 96th chapter. It is, of course, impossible to give the exact date or even the exact order in which the various chapters were revealed, but it is a fact that this chapter formed an essential part of the Muslim prayers from the earliest days when prayer was made obligatory for the Muslims, and there is a vast mass of evidence showing that this happened very early after the Prophet's call.

The chapter is headed by the words *Bismilláh-ir-Rahmán-ir-Rahím,* which head every one of the 114 chapters of the Holy Quran with the exception of one only, the ninth, while the same sentence occurs once in the middle of a chapter, viz. in 27 : 30, thus occurring 114 times in the Holy Quran. The phrase has besides acquired such a wide usage among the Muslims that it is the first thing which a Muslim child learns, and in his everyday affairs the *Bismilláh* is the first word which a Muslim utters. The heading of every chapter of the Holy Quran by these words which in the two attributes *Rahmán* and *Rahím* give expression to Divine love and mercy, shows clearly that the love and mercy of God is the chief theme of the Holy Book.

The *Fátihah* has a special importance as a prayer, being an essential part of every prayer, whether offered in congregation or in private, and therefore it has a much greater importance for the Muslim than the Lord's prayer for a Christian. And there is another difference too. The latter is instructed to pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, whereas the Muslim is instructed to seek for his right place in that kingdom, which had already come, the hint no doubt being that the coming of the Holy Prophet was really the advent of the kingdom of God about whose approach Jesus preached to his followers (Mark 1 : 15).

The prayer contained in this chapter is the sublimest of all the prayers that exist in any religion, and occupies the first place among all the prayers contained in the Quran itself. A chorus of praise has gone forth for it from even the greatest detractors of the Holy Quran, and they have been compelled to " admire its spirit ". The entire chapter is composed of seven verses, the first three of which speak of the four chief Divine attributes, viz. providence, love, mercy, and requital, thus giving expression to the grandeur and praise of the Divine Being, and the last three lay open before the Great Maker the earnest desire of man's soul to walk in

righteousness without stumbling on either side, while the middle one is expressive of man's entire dependence on God. The attributes referred to are those which disclose God's all-encompassing beneficence and care, and His unbounded love for all of His creatures, and the ideal to which the soul is made to aspire is the highest to which man can rise, the path of righteousness, the path of grace, and the path in which there is no stumbling. If, on the one hand, the narrow views which addressed the Divine Being as the Lord of a particular nation are swept off before the mention of His equal providence and equal love for all mankind, nay for all the creatures that exist in all the worlds, and the idea of paternal care and affection contained in the word *Father* dwindles into insignificance before the all-embracing beneficence and love of the *Rabb* of all existence Who provides and regulates the means of existence, nourishment, and perfection of the creatures long before they come into existence, there is, on the other, the high aspiration of the soul for an unbounded spiritual rise unhampered by all considerations of cares of the body which craves for the "daily bread", and even of solicitude for forgiveness of wrongs done and injuries inflicted, for the soul seeks to rise to a place where wrongs and injuries are not known. It makes the soul aspire to the great spiritual eminence to which arose those to whom God was gracious, the prophets, the truthful, the faithful, and the righteous (4 : 71).

The *Fátihah* is looked upon as the quintessence of the whole Quran. It is for this reason that in 15: 87 it is spoken of as the *Great Quran*. And so in fact it is, as the name *Umm-ul-Quran*, or the basis of the Quran, a name given to it by the Holy Prophet himself, shows. Hence the Quran is treated as beginning with Ch. 2.

In the name of God,[1] the Beneficent, the Merciful.[2]

1 (All) Praise is due to God, the Lord of the worlds,[3]
2 The Beneficent, the Merciful, 3 Master of the day of

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[1] *Alláh* is a proper name applied to the *Being Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection.* The word *Alláh* is not applied to any being except the only true God, and comprises all the excellent names, and the Arabs never gave the name Allah to any of their numerous idols. Hence, as being the proper name of the Divine Being, it has really no equivalent in any other language, and the word *God* is adopted in the translation only as a matter of necessity.

[2] *Ar-Rahmán* and *Ar-Rahim* are both active participle nouns of different measures denoting intensiveness of significance, the former indicating the greatest preponderance of the quality of mercy, and the latter being expressive of a constant repetition and manifestation of that attribute. The attribute of mercy in *Ar-Rahmán* is manifested, before man comes into existence, in the creation of things that are necessary for his life here, and therefore shows the loving care of God for His creatures, while the same attribute in *Ar-Rahim* is manifested over and over again when man has done something to deserve it. These two attributes, which are the oftest recurring attributes of the Divine Being in the Holy Quran, thus give expression to the unbounded love and mercy of God which is really the chief theme of the Holy Quran.

[3] *Rabb* signifies the *fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make*

requital.[1] 4 Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. 5 Guide us on the right path, 6 The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, 7 Not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray.[2]

PART I

CHAPTER 2

AL-BAQARAH: THE COW

(*Medina*—40 *sections*; 286 *verses*)

THIS chapter deals mainly with the Jews and their contentions against Islam, and hence it is that much of the legislation, details of which necessarily differ from the Jewish law, and most of the Jewish objections to the prophethood of Muhammad, are dealt with in this chapter. It opens with a brief statement of the fundamental principles of Islam, and after mentioning the consequences of their acceptance or rejection in the first section, and dealing with lip-professions in the second, draws an inference of the truth of those principles, and more particularly of Divine Unity, by referring to the work of God in nature in the third. The fourth section proceeds to show that man is endowed with vast capabilities, but suffers the consequences of wasting his opportunity, and this is illustrated in the story of Adam. In the fifth section, reference is made to the covenant with the Israelites, and they are told how the Quran fulfils the prophecies met with in their books,

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it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion. Hence *Rabb* is the Author of all existence, Who has not only given to the whole creation its means of nourishment but has also beforehand ordained for each a sphere of capacity and within that sphere provided the means by which it continues to attain gradually to its goal of perfection. It will thus be seen that the word *Rabb*, which, for want of a better word, I render as *Lord*, conveys a far nobler and grander idea than the word *ab* or *father*, which has comparatively a very limited significance.

[1] *Mâlik* and *malik* are two different words from the same root, the former signifying *master* and the latter *king*. The adoption of the word *mâlik* or *master* is to show that God is not guilty of injustice if He forgives His servants, because He is not a mere king or a mere judge, but more properly a *Master*. The word *yaum* indicates *a period of time, whatever period it may be.* As there are ample indications in the Quran that the Divine law of requital is working every moment, the law of requital referred to in this verse is therefore a law which is constantly at work.

[2] According to a report, those upon whom wrath is brought down are the Jews and those who go astray are the Christians. Of course the words are only explanatory and the significance is that one should neither be excessive in hatred like the Jews, who denounced a prophet of God, nor excessive in love like the Christians who deified a prophet of God, and should keep to the middle path. Or, because wrath is brought down upon a man on account of his evil deeds, and he goes astray by following erroneous doctrines, the Muslim is taught to pray to be kept on the right course in deeds as well as in doctrine.

and the next two sections are devoted to Divine favours on them and their stubbornness, being followed by three others which speak of their degeneration, their hard-heartedness, and their violation of covenants. The eleventh section speaks of their objections to the Holy Prophet, and the twelfth refers to their great enmity and to their plans against him. The thirteenth states that former scriptures are abrogated and a better and more advanced code is given in the form of Islam, the religion of entire submission. The next section points out that partial good is met with in all religions, but it is only in Islam that religion attains to perfection. The fifteenth reminds the Israelites of the covenant with Abraham, which required the raising of a prophet from among the Ishmaelites, being followed by another dealing with the religion of the great patriarch. The subject of *Qiblah* being transferred to the Kaba, the house rebuilt by Abraham, is thus introduced, and the next two sections, while declaring the Kaba to be the new centre of spiritual activity, also give reasons for the change. The nineteenth warns the Muslims that they must undergo hard trials before they obtain mastery of the Sacred House, which was henceforth to be the centre of the Muslims, though the idolatry prevailing there was certainly destined to disappear, while Unity must ultimately obtain the triumph, this being made clear in the twentieth section. Certain minor differences with the Jewish law are then introduced as against the common principle of the doctrine of Unity, and thus the laws relating to foods, retaliation, bequest, fasting, fighting, pilgrimage, wine, gambling, orphans, marital obligations, divorce, and widowhood are discussed in the eleven sections that follow. The next two make a reversion to the subject of fighting in defence, which was necessary if the Muslims would escape national death, and illustrations are given from the Israelite history. We are then told in the thirty-fourth section of the mighty power of God to give life to the dead, and the Muslims are told that they should not use compulsion in the matter of religion, as their opponents had done. Two instances are then quoted in the following section, one from the history of Abraham and the other from the Israelitish history, showing how dead nations are raised to life. But national growth and prosperity, we are immediately told in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sections, depend on acts of sacrifice, and every penny spent in the cause of truth yields seven hundredfold and even much more fruit. The Muslims, being thus promised abundance of wealth as the result of their sacrifices, are warned in the following section against usurious dealings which breed an inordinate love for wealth, for the amassing of wealth was not the goal of a Muslim's life. They are at the same time told, in the thirty-ninth section, to guard their property rights by the employment of writing in their transactions and securing evidence. In conclusion they are taught a prayer for the ultimate triumph of the truth. Thus we find no break in the continuity of the subject and the change, whenever necessary, is introduced quite naturally.

This chapter was revealed at Medina, and belongs to the earliest Medinian revelations. The major portion of it was revealed in the second year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Fundamental Principles of Islam

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower.[1] 2 This book, there is
no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil),[2]
3 Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer
and spend out of what We have given them;[3] 4 And
who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and
that which was revealed before thee, and of the hereafter
they are sure.[4] 5 These are on a right course from their
Lord, and these it is that shall be successful. 6 Those
who disbelieve, it being alike to them whether thou warn
them or do not warn them, will not believe.[5] 7 God has
set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and

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[1] The original words are *alif, lám, mím*. The combinations of letters or single letters occurring at the commencement of several chapters of the Holy Quran, twenty-nine in all, are called *muqatta'át*, and according to the best received opinion these letters are abbreviations standing for words. *Alif* here stands for *ana* (I), *lám* for Alláh, and *mím* for *a'lam* (best knower). The 3rd, 29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd chapters open with the same letters carrying the same significance.

[2] The Quran is here called *al-kitáb*, or *the Book*. The root-word *Kataba* means *he wrote* and *kitáb*, or *book*, is a writing which is complete in itself. The application of the word *kitáb* to the Holy Quran occurs in very early revelations, and the use of the word shows clearly that the Quran was from the first meant to be a *complete book*, and one that existed not only in the memory of men but also in visible characters on writing material, for otherwise it could not be called *al-kitáb*. Thus there is conclusive internal evidence in the use of this word that its arrangement, without which it could not be called a book, was effected by the Holy Prophet himself.

The word *muttaqí* may properly be translated only as *one who guards himself* (*against evil*), or *one who is careful* (*of his duty*).

[3] The *ghaib* or unseen stands here for the Divine Being.

[4] Of all the religions of the world Islam is the only one that has laid down the broad basis of faith in all the prophets of the world, and the recognition of truth in all religions is its distinctive characteristic. The words *that which was revealed before thee* include revelations to all the nations of the world, for we are elsewhere told that "there is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (35 : 24). The Quran does not, however, mention all the prophets by their names, for "there are some of them that We have mentioned to thee and there are others whom We have not mentioned to thee" (40 : 78).

A belief in a life after death is the last of the five fundamental principles of Islam that are stated here. It is only this belief that can make the generality of men conscious of the responsibility of human actions. A life after death, according to Islam, implies a state of existence which begins with death, but a complete manifestation of which takes place later, when the fruits of the actions done in this life take their final shape.

[5] The passage, *it being . . . them*, is parenthetical and should be translated as such. The meaning is quite clear, viz. disbelievers of a particular type, i.e. those who pay no heed at all to the Prophet's warning, cannot benefit by his preaching.

over their eyes is a covering, and there is a great chastisement for them.[1]

SECTION 2.—Lip-Profession

8 And there are some people who say: We believe in God and the last day; and they are not at all believers.[2]
9 They desire to deceive God and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive.
10 In their hearts is a disease, so God increased their disease, and they shall have a painful chastisement because
they lied. 11 And when it is said to them, Do not make mischief in the land, they say: We are but peacemakers.
12 Now surely they are the mischief-makers, but they do
not perceive. 13 And when it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, they say: Shall we believe as the fools believe? Now surely they themselves are the fools, but
they do not know. 14 And when they meet those who believe, they say, We believe; and when they are alone with their devils,[3] they say: Surely we are with you, we
were only mocking. 15 God shall pay them back their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy,
blindly wandering on. 16 These are they who buy error for guidance, so their bargain shall bring no gain, nor are
they the followers of the right direction. 17 Their parable is like the parable of one who kindled a fire,[4] but when it had illumined all around him, God took away their light,
and left them in darkness—they do not see: 18 Deaf,
dumb, (and) blind, so they do not turn back. 19 Or like abundant rain (pouring forth) from the cloud in which is

[1] It should be noted that only those disbelievers are spoken of here who so hardened their hearts as not to pay any heed to the Prophet's preaching and warning, as clearly indicated in the previous verse. It is not on every heart that the seal is set, but only on that of the reprobate, the hardened sinners who pay no heed to the call of the reformer

[2] The persons spoken of in this verse are the hypocrites, who were a source of constant trouble to the Holy Prophet at Medina. Before he came to that city, Abdulla bin Ubayy was a person of note there, and he expected to become the leader. But the Holy Prophet's advent and his recognition by all the communities of that city as the head of the republic there, robbed Abdulla of those dearly cherished hopes, and he along with his followers adopted an attitude of hypocrisy towards the Holy Prophet and his companions. The case of the hypocrites is dealt with at length here, in 3: 148–180, 4: 60–152, 9: 38–127, and in the 63rd chapter, and occasionally elsewhere.

[3] By their *devils* are meant *their leaders in unbelief*.

[4] The kindler of the fire is the Holy Prophet, who kindled the torch of light.

darkness and thunder and lightning ; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder-peal, for fear of death, and God encompasses the unbelievers. 20 The lightning almost takes away their eyes ; whenever it shines on them they walk in it, and when it becomes dark to them they stand still ; and if God had pleased He would have taken away their hearing and their sight ; for God has power over all things.

SECTION 3.—**Divine Unity**

21 O men ! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard (against evil), 22 Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a structure, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits ; therefore do not set up rivals to God while you know.
23 And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers besides God if you are truthful.[1]
24 But if you do (it) not—and never shall you do (it)—then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones[2] are the fuel ; it is prepared for the unbelievers.
25 And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow ; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say : This is what was given to us before ; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates therein, and therein they shall abide.[3]

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[1] That the Quran is a unique production of Arabic literature and has ever been regarded as the standard of the purity of that literature goes without saying, but the chief characteristic of the Holy Book is the wonderful transformation which it accomplished, and it is to this that the challenge in particular refers. That the transformation wrought by it is unparalleled in the history of the world is admitted on all hands. Its injunctions swept off the most deep-rooted evils, like idolatry and drunkenness, so as to leave no trace of them in the Arabian Peninsula, welded the warring elements of Arabian society into one nation, and made an ignorant people the foremost torchbearers of knowledge and science.

[2] A formidable man was called *hajar*, or *stone*, by the Arabs.

[3] Gardens with rivers flowing in them is the ever-recurring description of a future life of the righteous that occurs in the Holy Quran. Elsewhere the pure word is compared to a tree which gives its fruit in all seasons (14 : 24). Therefore the fruits which a man shall find in paradise are the fruits of his own good deeds which have grown into trees. And as good deeds are likened to fruit-bearing trees, faith is likened to water repeatedly in the Holy Quran, being the source of physical life. Thus as the righteous are always spoken of as being those who

26 God is not ashamed to set forth any parable—(that of) a gnat or any thing above that;[1] then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, and as for those who disbelieve, they say: What is it that God means by this parable? He leaves many in error by it and many He leads aright by it; but He does not leave in error by it (any) except the transgressors,[2]
27 Who break the covenant of God after its confirmation and cut asunder what God has ordered to be joined, and make mischief in the land; these it is that are the losers.
28 How do you deny God and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, then you shall be brought back to Him.
29 He it is who created for you all that is in the earth; then He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.[3]

SECTION 4.—Man's Vast Capabilities

30 And when thy Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule (in it),[4] they said:

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believe and *do good*, paradise, which stands for their reward, is always described as being a *garden* in which *rivers* flow, the rivers corresponding to faith, and the trees of the garden corresponding to the good which a man does. In fact the paradise spoken of in the Holy Quran is the garden which grows out of man's own deeds; hence it is that a paradise is spoken of as being granted to the righteous in this very life, a reference to which is contained here in the words: *This is what was given to us before*, i.e. in this life, while we are plainly told that the fruits which they shall have in the next life shall be *like* those which they are made to taste even here. As for their mates, see 36:56: "They and their wives shall be in shades".

[1] To express the utmost degree of weakness, the Arabs say, "weaker than the gnat." Parables of the fly (22:73) and the spider (29:41) are set forth in the Holy Quran showing the weakness of the false deities.

[2] The word *idlál* occurring here is usually translated as *leading astray*, which is clearly a wrong translation. It is the devil who leads astray (28:15) or the ignorant leaders of the people (6:120). *Idlál* carries two other significances, *finding one in error*, or *declaring one to be in error*; and either of these meanings suits the context, as we are told plainly that only the transgressors are thus dealt with, showing clearly that *idlál* is the result of their transgression.

[3] The word *samá*, rendered here as heaven, means in Arabic the higher or upper part of anything and hence indicates really what we see above us. In 41:11, *samá* or heaven is plainly called *dukhán* or *vapour*. The seven heavens may refer either to the seven magnitudes of the stars seen by the naked eye or to the seven major planets of the solar system. But it should also be noted that the Arabic equivalents of the words *seven*, *seventy* and *seven hundred* are all used by the Arabs to indicate a large number, not the exact number always.

[4] The original word *khalífah* means primarily *a successor*, and hence *the supreme or the greatest ruler who supplies the place of him who has been*

What ! wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief
in it and shed blood,[1] and we celebrate Thy praise and
extol Thy holiness ? He said : I know what you do not
know. 31 And He gave Adam knowledge of all things,[2]
then presented them to the angels, and said : Tell Me the
names of those if you are right. 32 They said : Glory
be to Thee ! we have no knowledge but that which Thou
hast taught us ; Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.[3] 33 He
said : O Adam ! inform them of their names. Then when
he had informed them of their names, He said : Did I not
say to you that I know what is unseen in the heavens
and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and
what you did hide ?[4] 34 And when We said to the
angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance,[5] but
Iblis (did it not) : he refused and he was proud, and he
was one of the unbelievers.[6] 35 And We said : O Adam !

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before him. What is stated here is an allegorical description of the preference of man above the whole of the creation on this earth, and then of the election of those righteous servants of God from among men themselves who lead others into the right path. Adam was our progenitor, but the Holy Quran does not say that the world, or even mankind, did not exist before him, nor that he lived only six thousand years ago, and here he stands for man in general. References to Adam are contained in 2 : 30–39, and in 3 : 58, 4 : 11–25, 15 : 28–44, 17 : 61–65, 18 : 50, 20 : 115–124, and 38 : 71–85.

[1] The reference is apparently to the darker side of the picture of humanity. Man's desire to rule has always led him to make mischief in the land and shed the blood of fellow-men.

[2] Razi, the well-known commentator, says : "He taught him the attributes of things and their descriptions and their characteristics, for the attributes of a thing are indicative of its nature". Giving Adam the knowledge of things signifies endowing man with the vast capability of acquiring knowledge of *all* things which he was created to rule, not the beasts, cattle and birds of the Bible.

[3] This is to show that even angels are not gifted with the vast capability of acquiring knowledge which is granted to man.

[4] "What you did hide" refers to those great qualities in man which preponderate the evil in him, and which remain hidden until they are made manifest through the Divine gift of knowledge. The immense capability of man for progress remains hidden, while the evil of shedding blood is manifested in a very primary stage in his growth.

[5] The angels are the intermediaries through whom the laws of nature find expression. Man is first endowed with a vast capability for knowledge, and through this he is now made to rule nature and acquire mastery over himself, and thus he is set on the path to make unlimited progress physically as well as morally.

[6] *Iblis* is derived from *balas* meaning *despair.* It is the same as Satan or devil. Just as the angel is associated with the higher qualities in man, the devil is associated with his lower or animal desires. The angel moves him on to do good and noble deeds ; the devil incites the baser passions in him. He thus becomes a hindrance in man's progress, and this is his refusal to obey. And the lesson taught here is that a great struggle is

dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, and eat from it a
plenteous (food) wherever you wish,[1] and do not approach
this tree, for then you will be of the unjust.[2] 36 But the
devil made them both fall from it, and caused them to
depart from that in which they were ;[3] and We said : Go
forth, some of you being the enemies of others,[4] and there
is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.
37 And Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so
He turned to him (mercifully) ; He is Oft-returning (to
mercy), the Merciful.[5] 38 We said : Go forth from this
all, so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me,
then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come
upon them, nor shall they grieve.[6] 39 And (as to) those
who disbelieve in and reject Our communications, they
are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide.

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to be carried on with the representative of the animal passions, the devil, who is ultimately subdued. See 50 : 21 where the impeller to evil and the caller to truth are plainly spoken of. And the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that he had subdued the devil, and every man is required to do the same, which amounts to saying that his physical desires should be so regulated that they should not hinder his progress.

[1] The dwelling in the garden where everything is plenteous indicates happiness of mind. Compare 20 : 124 where a straitened life indicates an unhappy life. The mate is brought in to complete the picture of happiness.

[2] The use of the words *this tree* clearly shows that the thing forbidden is something well known to all men. And as the Holy Quran tells us, it is evil which all the prophets of God have forbidden man to approach. Nay, hatred for evil is implanted in the very nature of man, and the reference here is to the inner voice, notwithstanding which man does fall into evil.

[3] Man and his mate fall into evil and their happiness of mind is disturbed, so they are made to depart from the garden of contentment in which they are placed first. Note that the Holy Quran nowhere speaks of the woman leading astray the man. As to the nature of this evil in the case of Adam, see 20 : 115 where it is ascribed to forgetfulness on the part of Adam.

[4] This *habû* or going forth is clearly quite different from their being turned out of the garden or the state of happiness in which they were. In fact it refers to the state of struggle with the devil in which man is placed by nature, the state in which man is liable to fall. But liability to fall is a thing quite different from the fall itself which a man can surely avoid if he follows Divine guidance as stated further on.

[5] This is the description of man receiving Divine revelation. The object is to show that in order to get to a state of perfect happiness in which he is not liable to fall into evil, man needs the help of Divine revelation. Man is not created in a state of sinfulness ; he is born sinless, but he is liable to fall into evil, and does fall into it so long as Divine revelation does not come to his help.

[6] The meaning is that all men are liable to err as Adam was, and perfection can only be attained by following Divine revelation.

SECTION 5.—Covenant with the Israelites

40 O children of Israel! call to mind My favour which
I bestowed on you and be faithful to (your) covenant with
Me, I will fulfil (My) covenant with you; and of (going
against) Me should you be afraid.[1] 41 And believe in
what I have revealed, verifying that which is with you,[2]
and be not the first to deny it, neither take a mean price
in exchange for My communications; and (going against)
Me should you guard against. 42 And do not mix up the
truth with the falsehood, nor do hide the truth while you
know. 43 And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and
bow down with those who bow down. 44 What! do you
enjoin men to be good and neglect your own souls while
you read the Book; have you no sense? 45 And seek
assistance through patience and prayer,[3] and surely it is
a hard thing except for the humble ones, 46 Who know
that they shall meet their Lord and that they shall return
to Him.

SECTION 6.—Divine Favours on Israelites

47 O children of Israel! call to mind My favour which
I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations.
48 And be on your guard against a day when one soul
shall not avail another in the least, neither shall inter-
cession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compen-
sation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped. 49 And
when We delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who sub-
jected you to severe torment,[4] killing your sons and sparing
your women,[5] and in this there was a great trial from
your Lord. 50 And when We parted the sea for you, so
We saved you and drowned the followers of Pharaoh and

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[1] Compare Deut. 26:17–19. Their covenant with the Lord was to keep the Divine commandments and to "hearken unto" His voice, i.e. accept the Prophet whom He sent to them as promised in Deut. 18:18, and God's covenant with them was to make them a great people. The fear of God in the Holy Quran always indicates the fear of the consequences in case one breaks His laws.

[2] The verification referred to here is clearly the fulfilment of the promise contained in Deut. 18:15–18: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearkeh. . . . I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

[3] The word *sabr* in Arabic stands for keeping firm under hardest trials.

[4] See Exod. 1:11, 14.

[5] See Exod. 1:15–18, 22.

you watched by.[1] 51 And when We appointed a time of
forty nights [2] with Moses, then you took the calf (for a god)
after him and you were unjust.[3] 52 Then We pardoned
you after that so that you might give thanks. 53 And
when We gave Moses the Book and the distinction that
you might walk aright. 54 And when Moses said to his
people: O my people! you have been unjust to your-
selves by taking the calf (for a god), therefore turn to your
Creator (penitently), and make yourselves submissive,[4]
that is best for you with your Creator; so He turned to
you (mercifully), for He is the Oft-returning (to mercy),
the Merciful. 55 And when you said: O Moses! we will
not believe in thee until we see God manifestly, so the
rumble overtook you while you looked on.[5] 56 Then We
raised you up after your stupor that you may give thanks.[6]
57 And We made the clouds to give shade over you [7] and
We sent to you manna and quails: [8] Eat of the good things
that We have given you; and they did not do Us any
harm, but they made their own souls suffer the loss.
58 And when We said: Enter this city, and eat from it
a plenteous (food) wherever you wish,[9] and enter the gate

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[1] The Quran does not say how the Israelites were made to pass through the sea or in what manner the parting of the sea was brought about. But see Exod. 14 : 21, "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night."

[2] See Exod. 24 : 18. [3] See 20 : 86–97, and Exod. 32.

[4] *Qatl* signifies ***killing*** and also ***bringing to submission*** (*qataltu-hú-zal-laltu-hú*) or ***purging*** the soul of evil desires (Raghib). The latter significance is more in consonance with the context which speaks of repentance, but if the former and the more well-known significance is adopted, the meaning would be ***kill your people***, i.e. the guilty ones. See, however, 20 : 97 which shows that even Sámirí, the real maker of the calf, was not put to death, and this corroborates the significance I have adopted.

[5] The same incident is related in 7 : 155 and there we are told that "the earthquake overtook them". In fact *sá'iqah*, the word used here, indicates any *vehement cry* and applies as well to the sound of thunder as to the rumbling noise which precedes an earthquake. The Bible mentions thunders and lightnings (Exod. 16 : 17).

[6] The ***maut*** mentioned in this verse refers to temporary loss of sensation, because on the same occasion Moses is spoken of as having fallen down "in swoon" (7 : 143), and the word *maut* in Ar. signifies *cessation of life* as well as *loss of sensation*. Or, it may mean their death in ignorance, and their raising up would then mean giving them spiritual light.

[7] See Exod. 13 : 21. But the Holy Quran does not say that the clouds hung over them for forty years.

[8] See Exod. 16.

[9] The city is too famous to be mentioned; it is Jerusalem. It was the land of which a promise was given to the Israelites. Compare 5 : 21 : "Enter the Holy Land which God has prescribed for you."

making obeisance, and say, Put down from us our heavy burdens, We will forgive you your wrongs and give more to those who do good (to others).
59 But those who were unjust changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon those who were unjust a punishment from heaven, because they transgressed.[1]

SECTION 7.—**Divine Favours on Israelites**

60 And when Moses prayed for drink for his people, We said: Smite the rock with thy staff.[2] So there flowed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking-place. Eat and drink of the provisions of God, and do not make mischief in the land, acting corruptly (therein).
61 And when you said: O Moses! we cannot bear with one food, therefore pray thy Lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions.[3] He said: Will you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city, so you will have what you ask for. And abasement and humiliation were brought down upon them, and they became deserving of God's wrath; this was so because they disbelieved in the communications of God and killed the prophets unjustly; this was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.[4]

SECTION 8.—**Israelites' Degeneration**

62 Those who believe, and the Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians,[5] whoever believes in God and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their

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[1] See 5 : 26; they were punished by being deprived of the Holy Land for forty years during which time they had to wander in the wilderness. The *change* spoken of here signifies their refusal to carry out Moses' command.

[2] The words may also be interpreted as meaning, *walk up to the rock with thy staff*, or *thy community*. See Exod. 15 : 23 and 17 : 1–6. Marah (Exod. 15 : 23) is now known as *'uyûn-i-Músá*, i.e. the springs of Moses. This shows that the alternative interpretation is preferable.

[3] See Num. 11 : 5–10.

[4] The verse speaks of the ultimate condition to which the Israelites were reduced when they persisted in setting at naught the Divine commandments and indulged in immoral and depraved practices. The reference is therefore to the later history of Israel. Rodwell misunderstands what is related here when he calls this an anachronism.

[5] A *sábi lit.* means one who goes forth from one religion to another. According to some, the Sabians were worshippers of angels, or stars. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, they were a semi-Christian sect of Babylonia resembling the followers of John the Baptist.

Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.[1]
63 And when We made a covenant with you and raised
the mountain above you[2]; Take hold of what We have
given you with firmness, and bear in mind what is in it,
so that you may guard (against evil). 64 Then you turned
back after that; so were it not for the grace of God and
His mercy on you, you would have been among the losers.
65 And surely you have known those among you who
exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, so We said to them:
Be (as) apes, despised and hated.[3] 66 Thus We made
them an example to those who witnessed it and those who
came after it, and an admonition to those who guard
(against evil). 67 And when Moses said to his people:
God commands you that you should sacrifice a cow; they
said: Dost thou ridicule us? He said: I seek the pro-
tection of God from being one of the ignorant.[4] 68 They
said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to
us what she is. (Moses) said: He says, She is a cow
neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age

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[1] Belief in God and the last day is equivalent to belief in Islam as the true religion. See v. 8, and 58:22. The statement made amounts to this, that the door of salvation, to an unlimited progress, is open to all people who accept the right principles of religion and act according to them, so that even a Muslim is not saved by his mere belief which without good deeds is only lip-profession. The existence of truth or good men in other religions is not denied by the Holy Quran, but perfect peace, or the state of absolute contentment which is indicated by freedom from grief and fear, is obtainable only in Islam, because Islam alone is the religion of absolute submission to the Divine Being.

[2] "They stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exod. 19:17). There is nothing in the words of the Quran to support the baseless story that the mountain was suspended in mid-heaven over the heads of the Israelites to frighten them into submission. Even 7:171 lends no colour to this story, because it only speaks of the earthquake which so terrified them that they thought that the mountain was going to fall down upon them.

[3] Mujáhid explains this in the following words: *They were not transformed or metamorphosed; it is only a parable which God has set forth for them, the like of what He has set forth in likening them to asses* (62:5), i.e. *their hearts were transformed, not that they were metamorphosed into apes.* The verse that follows lends support to this explanation, so also 4:47 and 5:60. In the latter place, those who were made apes are spoken of as *erring from the straight path*, a description entirely inapplicable to apes.

[4] As the Israelites held the cow in great honour, and even worshipped it, as is clear from their worship of the golden calf, they were ordered to slaughter such cows as were usually let abroad and worshipped as sacred objects—cows not wrought with, nor drawn in yoke but let loose to wander abroad, and the cow mentioned in these verses is a typical cow answering this description. The object was to root out their tendency to cow-worship. See also Deut. 22:1–9.

between that (and this); do therefore what you are com-
manded. 69 They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake
to make it plain to us what her colour is. (Moses) said:
He says, She is a yellow cow; her colour is intensely
yellow, giving delight to the beholders. 70 They said:
Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what
she is, for to us the cows are all alike, and if God please
we shall surely be guided aright. 71 (Moses) said: He
says, She is a cow not made submissive that she should
plough the land, nor does she irrigate the tilth, sound,
without a blemish in her. They said: Now thou hast
brought the truth; and they sacrificed her, though they
had not the mind to do (it).

SECTION 9.—Israelites' Hard-heartedness

72 And when you (almost) killed a man, then you
disagreed with respect to that, and God was to bring forth
that which you were going to hide.[1] 73 So We said:
Strike him with somewhat of it; thus God brings the
dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you may
understand.[2] 74 Then your hearts hardened after that,
so that they were like rocks, or harder (still), and there
are some rocks from which streams burst forth, and there
are some of them which split asunder and water issues out
of them, and there are some of them which fall down for
fear of God, and God is not at all heedless of what you do.
75 Do you then hope that they would believe in you, and
a party from among them indeed used to hear the word
of God, then altered it after they had understood it, and

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[1] Compare 4 : 153–157 where after enumerating almost all the incidents narrated here in the three previous sections, the Quran goes on to accuse the Jews of making an attempt to murder Jesus. It will be seen that the incidents of the last three sections are repeated in 4 : 153–155 briefly, and then comes their sin against Jesus in 4 : 157. This answers exactly to verses 72 and 73, only that the name is omitted here. The comparison makes it clear that it is the apparent killing of Jesus that is referred to here. It should be noted that the Israelites are here accused as a nation, and as a nation the Quran has elsewhere accused them of killing their prophets; see v. 61. The word *qatl* signifies *slaying* as well as *making* a person *like One who is slain*, and this is the meaning here.

[2] The verse points to the fact that the act of murder was not completed, for after Jesus was taken down from the cross, his legs were not broken, which act was necessary to bring about death in case the duration of crucifixion was less than three days, in the case of Jesus it being only from three to six hours.

they know (this).[1] 76 And when they meet those who believe they say, We believe, and when they are alone one with another they say: Do you talk to them of what God has disclosed to you that they may contend with you by this before your Lord? Do you not understand?[2] 77 Do they not know that God knows what they hide and what they make known? 78 And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but only lies, and they do but conjecture. 79 Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say, This is from God, so that they may take for it a small price; so woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn. 80 And they say: Fire shall not touch us but for a few days.[3] Say: Have you received a promise from God, then God will not fail to perform His promise, or do you speak against God what you do not know? 81 Yea! whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, these are the inmates of the fire: in it they shall abide. 82 And those who believe and do good deeds are the dwellers of the garden, in it they shall abide.

SECTION 10.—Violation of Covenant

83 And when We made a covenant with the children of Israel: [4] You shall not serve any but God [5] and (you shall) do good to (your) parents,[6] and to the near of kin, and to the orphans and the needy,[7] and you shall speak to men good words and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate.[8] Then you turned back except a few of you and you turned away afar. 84 And when We made a covenant with you: You shall not shed your blood and you shall not turn your

[1] That the Israelites did not preserve their sacred books in their purity is a constant charge laid by the Quran against the Jews and the Christians. The alteration and corruption of the various books of the Bible is now proved beyond all doubt, and thus recent investigation has laboriously arrived at the conclusion which was announced by the Holy Quran thirteen hundred years ago.

[2] They remonstrate with their less careful co-religionists, who would talk of the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet with the Muslims.

[3] The Jews believed that no Jew, however wicked, would suffer punishment for over a year. The Christians think they would not be punished at all.

[4] God's making a covenant with a people signifies His giving commandments to them. See Deut. 4 : 13.

[5] See Exod. 20 : 3 and 23 : 25.

[6] See Exod. 20 : 12 and Deut. 5 : 16.

[7] See Deut. 15 : 11.

[8] See Deut. 14 : 28, 29.

people out of your cities ; and you gave a promise while
you witnessed.[1] 85 Yet you it is who slay your people
and turn a party from among you out of their homes,
backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceed-
ing the limits ; and if they come to you as captives you
ransom them—while their very turning out was unlawful
for you.[2] Do you believe in a part of the book and deny
a part ? But what is the reward of such among you as
do this except disgrace in the life of this world, and on the
day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most
grievous chastisement, and God is not heedless of what
you do. 86 These are they who buy the life of this world
at the price of the hereafter, so their chastisement shall
not be lightened nor shall they be helped.

SECTION 11.—**The Prophet's Rejection**

87 And certainly We gave Moses the book and We sent
apostles after him one after another : and We gave Jesus,
the son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him
with the holy spirit.[3] What ! whenever an apostle came
to you with that which your souls did not desire, you
were insolent, so you called some liars and some you slay.
88 And they say : Our hearts are repositories. Nay, God
has cursed them on account of their unbelief ; so little it
is that they believe.[4] 89 And when there came to them

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[1] See Exod. 20 : 13, 17.

[2] Two Jewish tribes, *Banu Quraiza* and *Banu Nazir*, living side by side at Medina, made an alliance with *Aus* and *Khazraj*, the two rival tribes of Medina, respectively, and when the latter fought against each other, their allies took part in the fighting, and thus one Jewish tribe slaughtered and imprisoned the other and laid waste their habitations, but afterwards collected subscriptions for the release of the Jewish prisoners, giving reason for this that their law commanded them to redeem the prisoners, and they fought against their co-religionists for the honour of their allies. The Muslim nations are repeating Jewish history to-day.

[3] The Holy Spirit stands for Gabriel in the Holy Quran. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit is an innovation of the Christians. The Jews never thought of it as a Divine person, nor did Jesus Christ himself. In the four Gospels the Holy Spirit is spoken of in exactly the same sense in which it was accepted by the Jews. But *Rúh* which is rendered here as *spirit* also means *revelation*, and with this significance the meaning of the passage would be that Jesus Christ was strengthened with Divine revelation ; and revelation is really a source of strength to the prophets of God. Therefore the *Rúh ul qudus* is either the Divine revelation or the Holy Spirit which brings down that revelation to the prophets of God.

[4] They said that, being descendants of prophets, their hearts were the repositories of knowledge, and being already, as it were, full of knowledge,

a Book from God verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved,[1] but when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so God's curse is on the unbelievers. 90 Evil is that for which they have sold themselves—that they deny what God has revealed, out of envy that God should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases[2]; so they have made themselves deserving of wrath upon wrath, and for the unbelievers is a disgraceful chastisement. 91 And when it is said to them, Believe in what God has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us; and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill God's prophets before (this) if you were indeed believers?[3] 92 And certainly Moses came to you with clear arguments, but you took the calf (for a god) in his absence and you were unjust. 93 And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you: Take hold of what We have given you with firmness and be obedient. They said: We hear and disobey.[4] And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their unbelief. Say: Evil is that which your belief bids you if you are believers. 94 Say: If the future abode with God is specially for you to the exclusion of (other) people, then invoke death if you are truthful.[5] 95 And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent on before, and God knows the unjust. 96 And thou wilt certainly find them the greediest of men for life, (greedier) than even those who are polytheists; one of them loves that he should be

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they did not stand in need of more; and they were told that it was really their unbelief which became the cause of their estrangement from the good which the Holy Prophet had brought.

[1] The Jews expected that when the promised prophet of Deut. 18:18 came, he would make them victorious over their enemies.

[2] They would not accept the new revelation because the recipient of it was a non-Israelite or an Arab.

[3] They rejected the new revelation on the ground that the recipient of it was a non-Israelite, yet they killed even Israelite prophets.

[4] "We disobey" is expressive of their condition, i.e. they disobeyed these commandments practically.

[5] According to Ibn-i-Abbas, the meaning is *invoke death on the party that lies* or *is false in its assertion.* Or it is meant that they should pray that death should overtake the Prophet, for their prayer against an impostor, as they considered him to be, must no doubt be listened to.

granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement, and God sees what they do.

SECTION 12.—Enmity towards the Prophet

97 Say: Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel—for he
revealed it to thy heart by God's command, verifying that
which is before it and a guidance and good news for the
believers—[1] 98 Whoever is the enemy of God and His
angels and His apostles and Gabriel and Michael, then
God is the enemy of the unbelievers.[2] 99 And certainly
We have revealed to thee clear communications and none
disbelieve in them except the transgressors. 100 What!
whenever they make a covenant, a part of them cast it
aside? Nay, most of them do not believe. 101 And
when there came to them an Apostle from God verifying
that which they have, a party of those who were given
the Book threw the Book of God behind their backs as if
they knew nothing. 102 And they followed what the
devils fabricated against the prophethood of Solomon, and
Solomon did not disbelieve,[3] but the devils disbelieved,
teaching men enchantment, and it was not revealed to
the two angels Harut and Marut at Babel, nor did they
teach (it to) any one, so that they should have said, We
are only a trial, therefore do not disbelieve; but they
learn from these two (sources) that by which they make
a distinction between a man and his wife; and they cannot
hurt with it any one except with God's permission, and
they learn what harms them and does not profit them,[4]

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[1] Michael was regarded by the Jews as a friend (Dan. 12 : 1). And they looked upon Gabriel as their enemy, because he was considered to be an avenging angel who brought down Divine punishment upon the guilty. But in the Bible, as in the Holy Quran, Gabriel is mentioned as delivering Divine messages to men, as in Dan. 8 : 16 and in Luke 1 : 19 and 26.

[2] I.e. God will repay them for their enmity.

[3] The Bible says that the wives of Solomon "turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11 : 4). The Quran contradicts this. The Rev. T. K. Cheyne shows conclusively in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* that Solomon was "not a polytheist."

[4] The story of two angels, *Hárút* and *Márút*, was taken by the Jews from the Persians. The Holy Quran plainly discredits it by denying that sorcery was revealed to certain angels at Babel, or that angels taught sorcery to men, giving them at the same time the warning, as was the common belief: *We are only a trial, therefore do not disbelieve.* This statement was added to the story to save the character of the angels as penitent. The statement made in the Quran amounts to this. The

and they know for certain that he who buys it shall have
no share of good in the hereafter, and evil is the price
for which they have sold themselves, had they but known
(this)! 103 And if they had believed and guarded them-
selves (against evil), reward from God would certainly have
been better, had they but known (this)!

SECTION 13.—**Abrogation of Former Scriptures**

104 O you who believe! do not say, listen to us, and say,
wait for us, and listen, and for the unbelievers is a painful
chastisement.[1] 105 Those who disbelieve from among the
followers of the Book do not like, nor do the polytheists,
that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord,
and God chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy,
and God is the Lord of mighty grace. 106 Whatever
communication We abrogate or cause it to be forgotten,
We bring one better than it or like it. Dost thou not
know that God has power over all things?[2] 107 Dost

Jews, instead of following the word of God, followed certain evil crafts which they falsely attributed to Solomon and to two angels at Babel. Solomon is declared free of the disbelief attributed to him, and the story of the two angels is declared to be a fabrication. But the Jews are blamed for learning something from these two sources, i.e. by their fabrications against Solomon and the story of the two angels. The clue to what this was is contained in what follows: *But they cannot hurt with it any one except with God's permission*, showing that by this craft they intended to inflict some injury on the Holy Prophet. Similar words are met with in 58:10 where the Jewish secret societies aiming at the destruction of Islam are spoken of, and the reference here is apparently to these. It is further clear that the words by which *they make a distinction between a man and his wife* refer to secret gatherings of the nature of masonic societies, for in freemasonry the women are totally excluded.

[1] *Râ'inâ* is the original for *listen to us*, but with a slight change of accent it becomes *ra'ina*, which means *he is foolish*. The Jews in derision changed the accent, "distorting the word," as stated in 4:46, and thus made it a term of reproach. The word *unzurnâ*, which means *wait for us* or *grant us a little delay*, is suggested instead, because it cannot be distorted like its equivalent *râ'inâ*. The Muslims are here forbidden to use a certain form of expression, but the real object is to show how great was the hatred of the Jews towards the Holy Prophet, so that they did not observe in his case even the ordinary rules of decency. Morally the injunction is one worthy of the highest regard, as it disapproves the use of words bearing a sinister meaning.

[2] The context shows that this verse speaks of the abrogation of the previous scriptures by the Holy Quran as the controversy is carried on with the Jews who rejected the Quranic revelation because it supplanted the law of Torah. The commentators, however, base upon it the wrong idea that some verses met with in the Holy Quran are abrogated by others. There is no saying of the Holy Prophet in support of this, nor is a single report traceable to the Holy Prophet showing any verse to be abrogated. What happened was this, that when somebody could not

thou not know that God's is the kingdom of the heavens
and the earth and that besides God you have neither a
guardian nor a helper? 108 Rather you wish to put ques-
tions to your Apostle, as Moses was questioned before,[1]
and whoever adopts unbelief instead of faith, he indeed has
lost the right direction of the way. 109 Many of the
followers of the Book wish that they could turn you
back into unbelievers after your faith, out of envy on
their part, after the truth has become manifest to
them; but pardon and forgive, so that God should bring
about His command; for God has power over all things.
110 And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and what-
ever good you send before for yourselves, you shall find
it with God; for God sees what you do. 111 And they
say: None shall enter the garden except he who is a Jew
or the Christians. These are their vain desires. Say:
Bring your proof if you are truthful. 112 Yea! whoever
submits himself entirely to God and he is the doer of good
(to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there
is no fear for them nor shall they grieve.[2]

SECTION 14.—**Perfect Guidance is in Islam**

113 And the Jews say, The Christians do not follow
anything (good), and the Christians say, The Jews do not
follow anything (good), while they both recite the (same)
Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like
to what they say;[3] so God shall judge between them on

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reconcile one verse with another and thought that there was a discrepancy between the two, he expressed the opinion that one of them was abrogated by the other. This is the reason that there is no agreement as to which verses are actually abrogated, and if one person has declared a certain verse to be abrogated, another has denied it because by giving a little more thought he could reconcile the two. A reference to 4 : 82 would make it clear that there are no discrepancies in the Holy Quran as imagined by the upholders of the doctrine of abrogation in the Quran. Note that the word *áyat* means a *verse* as well as a *message* or a *communication* from God.

[1] The Jews are addressed here. They vexed Moses with all sorts of questions and now they behaved towards the Holy Prophet similarly.

[2] The Jews and the Christians are told that their assertions that only the Jews and the Christians will be saved, are groundless. It is entire submission to God and the doing of good to His creatures that is the true source of salvation, and that is what *Islam* means according to the Holy Quran.

[3] Those who have no knowledge are the Arabs. On account of their ignorance they said that there was no good in other religions. The Jews and the Christians spoke of each other similarly. The Muslims are thus taught not to condemn other religions as being devoid of all good.

the day of resurrection as to what they differ. 114 And
who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the
mosques of God, that His name should be remembered in
them, and strives to ruin them ? [1] (As for) these, it was
not proper for them that they should have entered them
except in fear ; they shall meet with disgrace in this world,
and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter.
115 And God's is the East and the West, therefore whither
you turn, thither is God's purpose ; [2] for God is Ample-
giving, Knowing. 116 And they say : God has taken to
Himself a son. Glory be to Him ; [3] rather, whatever is in
the heavens and the earth is His ; all are obedient to Him.
117 Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth,
and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, and
there it is. 118 And those who have no knowledge say :
Why does not God speak to us or a sign come to us ? Even
thus said those before them, the like of what they say ;
their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made the
communications clear for a people who are sure. 119 We
have sent thee with the truth as a bearer of good news and
as a warner, and thou shalt not be called upon to answer
for the companions of the flaming fire. 120 And the Jews
will not be pleased with thee nor the Christians, until thou
follow their religion. Say : God's guidance, that is the
(true) guidance.[4] And if thou follow their desires after the
knowledge that has come to thee, thou shalt have neither
a guardian against God nor a helper. 121 Those to
whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be
followed. These believe in it ; and whoever disbelieves
in it, these it is that are the losers.

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[1] The enemies of Islam did not recognize any good in Islam and were bent on destroying it. The Quraish did not allow the Muslims to say their prayers in the Sacred Mosque, and turned them out of Mecca. The Jews were bent on turning them out of Medina.

[2] The meaning is that if the Muslims serve God, it does not matter whether they are in the sacred mosque or elsewhere ; whether they are in the East or in the West. God is not limited to a place.

[3] According to the Christian doctrine, God, "the Father", could not show mercy to sinful men ; hence "the son" was required to suffer. It is in allusion to this recognition of imperfection in God that the words *subhána-hú*, or glory be to God, are used.

[4] The Muslims are told to recognize good in all religions, because according to the plain teachings of the Quran, all religions have a Divine origin. But they are not to follow those religions because they have a perfect guidance in the Holy Quran.

SECTION 15.—Covenant with Abraham

122 O children of Israel! call to mind My favour which
I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations.
123 And be on your guard against a day when no soul
shall avail another in the least, neither shall any compensation be accepted from it, nor shall intercession profit it,
nor shall they be helped. 124 And when his Lord tried
Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said:
I will make thee a leader of men. (Abraham) said: And
of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.[1] 125 And when We made the house a resort
for men and a (place of) security—and take Abraham's
place for a place of prayer[2]—and We enjoined Abraham
and Ishmael, saying: Purify My House for those who visit
(it) and those who abide (in it) for devotion and those who
bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.[3] 126 And
when Abraham said: My Lord! make it a secure town and
provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in
God and the last day, He said: And whoever disbelieves,
I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I will
drive him to the chastisement of the fire; and it is an evil
destination. 127 And when Abraham and Ishmael raised
the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from
us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing: 128 Our

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[1] The Israelites' contention was that prophethood should always remain in the house of Israel, and that the promised prophet of Deut. 18 : 18 should be an Israelite. In this section they are told that the covenant was made, not with Israel, but with Abraham and Ishmael, and that therefore the seed of Ishmael and Isaac were equally to be blessed. The following arguments show that the covenant included both Ishmael and Isaac: (1) The promise to bless Abraham and his seed was given long before either Ishmael or Isaac was born (Gen. 12 : 2, 3). (2) The promise given to Abraham regarding the multiplicity of his seed is the same as that given to Hagar regarding Ishmael when she conceived him (Gen. 15 : 5 and 16 : 10). (3) The covenant was renewed with Ishmael after Isaac was promised (Gen. 17 : 20).

[2] *Maqám-i-Ibráhim* or Abraham's place is a small building in the Kaba, but the whole of the sanctuary is also known as such, and this is what is meant here. Thus the injunction really aims at making the Kaba a *qibla*, i.e. the direction to be faced in saying prayers.

[3] The injunction to Abraham and Ishmael to purify "My House" shows that the Kaba or *Bait-Ulláh* was there even before Abraham, and this view is supported by what is stated in 3 : 95 about the Kaba as the "First House" made on earth for the worship of God. Sir William Muir admits the very remote antiquity of the Kaba in the Introduction to his *Life of Muhammed.* The required purification was probably from idol-worship. The Kaba was also rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael as stated in v. 127.

Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise)
from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show
us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), for
Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful:
129 Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from
among them [1] who should recite to them Thy communica-
tions and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify
them; Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.

SECTION 16.—The Religion of Abraham

130 And who forsakes the religion of Abraham but he
who makes himself a fool, and certainly We chose him in
this world, and in the hereafter he is surely among the
righteous. 131 When his Lord said to him, Submit, he
said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds. 132 And
the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did)
Jacob: O my sons! God has chosen the religion for you,
therefore die not unless you are Muslims.[2] 133 Or were
you present when death visited Jacob, when he said to
his sons: What will you serve after me? They said:
We will serve thy God and the God of thy fathers, Abraham
and Ishmael and Isaac, one God only, and to Him do we
submit. 134 This is a people that have passed away;
they shall have what they earned and you shall have what
you earn, and you shall not be called upon to answer for
what they did. 135 And they say: Be Jews or Christians,
you will be on the right course. Say: Nay! (we follow)
the religion of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not
one of the polytheists. 136 Say: We believe in God and
(in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that
which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac
and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given
to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the
prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction
between any of them, and to Him do we submit.[3] 137 If

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[1] It is in reference to this prayer of Abraham that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: I am the prayer of my father, Abraham.

[2] See Gen. 18 : 19.

[3] This shows the cosmopolitan nature of a Muslim's belief. Not only is belief in the great prophets of Israel an article of faith with a Muslim, but the words *that which was given to the prophets from their Lord* make the Muslim conception of belief in prophets as wide as the world. And

then they believe as you believe in Him, they are indeed
on the right course, and if they turn back, then they are
only in opposition, so God will suffice thee against them,
and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.
138 (Receive) the
baptism of God—and who is better than God in baptizing—
and Him do we serve.
139 Say: Do you dispute with us
about God, and He is our Lord and your Lord, and we
shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds, and
we are sincere to Him? [1]
140 Nay! do you say that
Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes
were Jews or Christians? Say: Are you better knowing
or God? And who is more unjust than he who conceals
a testimony that he has from God? And God is not heed-
less of what you do.
141 This is a people that have passed
away: they shall have what they earned and you shall
have what you earn, and you shall not be called upon to
answer for what they did.

PART II

SECTION 17.—Kaba as the Centre

142 The fools among the people will say: What has
turned them from their *qiblah* which they had? [2] Say:
God's is the East and the West; He guides whom He
likes to the right path.
143 And thus We have made you
an equitable nation that you may be the bearers of witness
to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of
witness to you; [3] and We did not make that which thou

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it should be noted that this broad conception was promulgated at a time when the Jews and the Christians were exerting themselves to the utmost against the new faith.

[1] A Muslim's conception of God is very broad. It includes all that is best in all other religions, but is free from the limitations they put. Therefore no one who is true to his own religion can dispute the Muslim conception of the Divine Being.

[2] *Qiblah* means *the direction or point towards which one turns his face.* The change here referred to is the change which took place at Medina about sixteen months after the flight to that city. It should be noted that while the Holy Prophet was at Mecca among the idolaters of Arabia, he used to pray with his face to the holy temple at Jerusalem, but when he came to Medina, where the Jewish element was strong and powerful, he was directed by Divine revelation to turn his face to the Kaba as his *qiblah.* Thus this change became the means of distinguishing the firm believers as pointed out in the next verse.

[3] The *bearers of witness* are the persons who carry knowledge to others, bearing testimony to its truth in their own persons; hence some commentators explain the word as meaning *a purifier.*

wouldst have to be the *qiblah* but that We might dis-
tinguish him who follows the Apostle from him who turns
back upon his heels, and this was surely hard except for
those whom God has guided aright; and God was not
going to make your faith to be fruitless; surely God is
Affectionate, Merciful to the people. 144 Indeed We see
the turning of thy face to heaven and We shall surely
make thee master of a *qiblah* which thou likest;[1] turn
then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever
you are, turn your faces towards it, and those who have
been given the Book surely know that it is the truth from
their Lord; and God is not heedless of what they do.
145 And even if thou bring to those who have been given
the Book every sign they would not follow thy *qiblah*,
nor canst thou be a follower of their *qiblah*, neither are
they the followers of each other's *qiblah*;[2] and if thou
follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to
thee, then thou shalt be among the unjust. 146 Those
whom We have given the Book recognize him as they
recognize their sons, and a party of them conceal the
truth while they know (it). 147 The truth is from thy
Lord, therefore thou shouldst not be of the disputers.

SECTION 18.—**Kaba as the Centre**

148 And every one has a direction to which he turns
(himself), therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever
you are, God will bring you all together; for God has
power over all things.[3] 149 And from whatsoever place
thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Sacred

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[1] The reference is to the Prophet's anxiety that the sacred house, the emblem of Divine Unity, was in the possession of the idolaters. He is told that he would soon be made master of it.

[2] Notwithstanding that the Jews and the Christians both looked to the temple at Jerusalem as their temple, they were not agreed upon it as their *qiblah*, for the Christians turned towards the east. Moreover, there are differences among the Jews and the Samaritans, though both follow the law of Moses.

[3] The meaning is that God intends to make all Muslims as one people, therefore He requires all to turn to one direction, to set one goal before them, and to have one centre to turn to wherever they may be. The unity of the *qiblah* among the Muslims really stands for their *unity of purpose* as being a nation which strives after one goal, and forms the basis on which rests the brotherhood of Islam; hence the saying of the Prophet: *Do not call the followers of your qiblah unbelievers.* But that noble lesson is now almost lost to the Muslims. The Kaba is an emblem of not only the Unity of God but also of the unity of mankind.

Mosque; and it is the very truth from thy Lord, and God
is not heedless of what you do.
150 And from whatsoever
place thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Sacred
Mosque; and wherever you are, turn your faces towards
it, so that people should have no plea against you, except
such of them as are unjust; so do not fear them, and fear
Me, that I may complete My favour on you and that you
may walk on the right course.
151 Even as We have
sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites
to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches
you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which
you did not know.[1]
152 So remember Me, I will remember
you, and give Me thanks and be not ungrateful to Me.

SECTION 19.—**Trials to be undergone**

153 O you who believe! seek assistance through
patience and prayer; for God is with the patient.[2]
154 And do not speak of those who are slain in God's
way as dead; nay, (they are) alive, but you do not perceive.[3]
155 And We will certainly try you with somewhat
of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits;
and give good news to the patient,
156 Who, when a
misfortune befalls them, say: We are God's and to Him
we shall return.
157 Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers
of the right course.
158 The Safa and the Marwah are
among the signs of God;[4] so whoever makes a pilgrimage
to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on
him if he goes round them both; and whoever does good

[1] As the Prophet of Abraham's prayer (see v. 129) was raised, it was necessary that the Kaba, with which Abraham's name had such a deep connection, should be made his *qiblah*.

[2] The Sacred Mosque at Mecca was in the possession of the idolaters, but by making it the *qiblah* of the Muslims, promise was no doubt given that it would soon be theirs, purified of idol-worship. But to attain this great object they must seek Divine assistance by remaining firm in all trials and tribulations and by constantly praying to God.

[3] That those who sacrifice their lives in the cause of truth never die is a truth which is generally recognized. As truth lives and falsehood must die, so those who make the triumph of truth the object of their lives do not die, even if they are slain in the cause of truth.

[4] The Safa and the Marwah are two mountains near Mecca. They were the scene of Hagar's running to and fro in quest of water when left along with Ishmael in the wilderness. They now serve as two monuments of the reward which patience brought.

spontaneously, then God is Bountiful in rewarding, Know-
ing.[1] 159 Those who conceal the clear arguments and
the guidance that We revealed after We made it clear
in the Book for men, these it is whom God shall curse,
and those who curse shall curse them (too),[2] 160 Except
those who repent and amend and make manifest (the
truth); these it is to whom I turn (mercifully), and I am
the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. 161 Those
who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, these
it is on whom is the curse of God and angels and men, all:
162 Abiding in it; their chastisement shall not be lightened
nor shall they be given respite. 163 And your God is
one God! there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

SECTION 20.—**Unity must prevail**

164 In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the
alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that
run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water
that God sends down from the cloud, then gives life with
it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds
of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds
made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there
are signs for a people who understand. 165 And there
are some among men who set up equals (with God) besides
God—they love them as they ought to love God [3]—and those
who believe are stronger in love for God—and O that those
who are unjust had seen, when they see the chastisement,
that the power is wholly God's, and that God is severe in
requiting (evil). 166 When those who were followed shall
renounce those who followed (them), and they see the
chastisement and their ties are cut asunder. 167 And
those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a
return, then we would renounce them as they have
renounced us. Thus will God show them their deeds to

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[1] On the Safa was an idol called Usaf, and on the Marwah one called Nailah, which the pilgrims respectfully touched in the days of ignorance, and hence the apprehension of the Muslims in going round them.

[2] The reference is to the curses predicted for the Israelites by Moses, Deut. 28 : 20–68.

[3] The equals with God spoken of here are the leaders who lead their followers into error, as v. 166 clearly shows.

be intense regret to them, and they shall not come out of the fire.[1]

SECTION 21.—**Prohibited foods**

168 O men! eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil; for he is your open enemy.[2] 169 He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you may speak against God what you do not know. 170 And when it is said to them, Follow what God has revealed, they say: Nay! we follow what we found our fathers upon. What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right way.[3] 171 And the parable of those who disbelieve is as the parable of one who calls out to that which hears no more than a call and a cry; deaf, dumb (and) blind, so they do not understand. 172 O you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to God if Him it is that you serve. 173 He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) God has been invoked;[4] but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; for God is Forgiving, Merciful. 174 As for those who conceal any part of the book that God has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and God will not speak to them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. 175 These are they who buy error for the right direction and chastisement for forgiveness; how bold they are to encounter fire! 176 This is because God has revealed the Book with

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[1] Their regret for their misdeeds becomes the fire of hell.

[2] The fundamental principle of faith, Divine Unity, having been discussed at length, certain secondary rules and regulations are now considered, and among these the subject of prohibited foods is introduced first.

[3] Blindly following one's ancestors is thus clearly condemned here.

[4] That which dies of itself and that which is torn by beasts was forbidden by the law of Moses also (Lev. 17 : 15), so was blood (Lev. 7 : 26), and the flesh of swine (Lev. 11 : 7). The Jews held the swine in great detestation, and the mention of the animal in the Gospels shows that Jesus Christ held it in equal abhorrence, which proves that he too regarded the animal as impure. Neither does he appear to have broken the Jewish law in this respect.

truth ; and those who go against the Book are in a great opposition.

SECTION 22.—**Retaliation and Bequests**

177 It is not righteousness that you turn your faces
towards the East and the West,[1] but righteousness is this
that one should believe in God and the last day and the
angels and the book and the prophets, and give away
wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the
orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars
and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep
up prayer and pay the poor-rate ; and the performers
of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient
in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are
they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who
guard (against evil). 178 O you who believe ! retaliation
is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain : the free
for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for
the female,[2] but if any remission is made to any one by his
(aggrieved) brother,[3] then prosecution (for the bloodwit)
should be made according to usage, and payment should
be made to him in a good manner ; this is an alleviation
from your Lord and a mercy ; so whoever exceeds the
limit after this, he shall have a painful chastisement,
179 And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation,
O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves.
180 Bequest is prescribed for you when death approaches
one of you, if he leaves behind wealth for parents and
near relatives, according to usage, a duty (incumbent)

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[1] Turning face to East or West stands for the outward ceremonial of religion. There is no good in following the ceremonial if the true spirit of religion is lost sight of.

[2] The Jewish law of retaliation is greatly modified in Islam, being limited only to cases of murder, while among the Jews it is extended to all cases of grievous hurt. After promulgating that law in general terms, the Quran proceeds to describe a particular case, viz. that if a free man is the murderer, he himself is to be slain : if a slave is the murderer, that slave is to be executed ; if a woman murdered a man, it was she that was to be put to death. The pre-Islamic Arabs used in certain cases to insist, when the person killed was of noble descent, upon the execution of others besides the murderer ; they were not content with the execution of the slave or the woman, if one of them happened to be the murderer.

[3] There may be circumstances which alleviate the guilt. In such cases the murderer may be made to pay a fine to the relatives of the murdered person. Such money is called *diyat* or *bloodwit.*

upon the righteous.[1] 181 Then whoever alters it after
he has heard it—the sin of it is only upon those who alter
it; for God is Hearing, Knowing. 182 But he who fears
an inclining to a wrong course or an act of disobedience
on the part of the testator, and effects an agreement
between them, there is no blame on him; for God is
Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 23.—Fasting

183 O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you,
as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may
guard (against evil),[2] 184 For a certain number of days;
but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall
fast) a (like) number of other days, and those who find it
hard to do so may effect a redemption by feeding a poor
man;[3] and whoever does good spontaneously it is better
for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.
185 The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran
was revealed,[4] a guidance to men and clear proofs of the
guidance and the distinction; therefore whoever of you
is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever
is sick or upon a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of
other days; God desires ease for you, and He does not
desire for you difficulty, and that you should complete
the number and that you should exalt the greatness of
God for having guided you and that you may give thanks.
186 And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then
surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant

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[1] It is a mistake to think that the injunction contained in this verse does not hold good, and that the verse is abrogated. The bequest enjoined here is meant specially for charitable purposes, and it was never abrogated.

[2] Fasting is a religious institution almost as universal as prayer. Even Christians were commanded to keep the fasts: see Matt. 6:16, 17; Lk. 5:33–35. But Islam has introduced quite a new meaning into the institution of fasting. Before Islam, fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow; in Islam, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. This is plainly stated in the concluding words: *So that you may guard against evil.* The object is that man may learn how he can shun evil, and hence fasting in Islam does not mean simply abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil.

[3] The permission to effect redemption by feeding a poor man is only for the sick and the traveller, as the context clearly shows.

[4] The first revelation came to the Holy Prophet on the blessed (44:3) or grand night (97:1) in the month of Ramadan.

when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and
believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. 187 It
is made lawful to you to approach your wives on the
night of the fast; they are an apparel for you and you are
an apparel for them; God knew that you intended acting
unfaithfully to yourselves,[1] so He has turned to you (merci-
fully) and removed from you (the rigour); so now be in
contact with them and seek what God has ordained for
you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day
becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn,
then complete the fast till night, and have not contact
with them while you keep to the mosques;[2] these are the
limits of God, so do not go near them. Thus does God
make clear His communications for men that they may
guard (against evil). 188 And do not swallow up your
property among yourselves by false means, neither seek
to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may
swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully
while you know.

SECTION 24.—Fighting in Defence

189 They ask thee concerning the new moons. Say:
They are times appointed for (the benefit of) men, and
(for) the pilgrimage;[3] and it is not righteousness that you
should enter the houses by their backs,[4] but righteousness
is this that one should guard (against evil); and go into
the houses by their doors and be careful (of your duty) to
God that you may be successful. 190 And fight in the

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[1] The Muslims at first thought that it was illegal to go in to their wives, even at night-time, on the days during which they kept fasts. This verse pointed out the error of the view and removed the rigour under which the Muslims had placed themselves.

[2] By this are meant those who cut themselves off from all worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, passing day and night in mosques. This practice is known as *i'tikáf*.

[3] The reference is particularly to the four months which were observed by the Arabs as sacred, in which the bitterest hostilities ceased and peace was established throughout the land, and thus trade was carried on peacefully and without molestation. It was also in one of these months that the pilgrimage to the sacred sanctuary at Mecca was performed.

[4] The Arabs were a very superstitious people. When one of them set before himself an important object and was unable to attain it, he would not go into his house by the door but entered it by the back. They used to do the same after performing a pilgrimage. Or, entering by the back indicates turning aside from the right course.

way of God with those who fight with you, and do not
exceed; for God does not love those who exceed (the
limits).[1] 191 And kill them wherever you find them,[2]
and drive them out from whence they drove you out,
and persecution is severer than slaughter; [3] and do not
fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight
with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them;
such is the recompense of the unbelievers. 192 But if
they desist, then God is Forgiving, Merciful. 193 And
fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion
is only for God,[4] but if they desist, then there should
be no hostility except against the oppressors. 194 The
sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things
are (under the law of) retaliation; whoever then acts
aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according
to the injury he has inflicted on you and be careful (of your
duty) to God, and know that God is with the righteous.
195 And spend in the way of God and cast not yourselves
to perdition with your own hands,[5] and do good (to others);
for God loves the doers of good. 196 And accomplish the
pilgrimage and the visit [6] for God, but if you are prevented,
(send) whatever offering is easy to obtain, and do not

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[1] It is the earliest revelation regarding the permission to fight, and in the whole of the Quran wherever the Muslims are told to carry on war against the non-Muslims, it is subject to the limitation imposed upon them here, i.e. they should not take up the sword first, and should not exceed the limits of the necessity of war. Islamic history shows clearly that the Holy Prophet had to take up the sword in self-defence and so did his companions.

[2] The personal pronoun *them* does not refer to non-Muslims generally but to those who are engaged in fighting against the Muslims as stated in the previous verse.

[3] The reference is to the severe persecution of the Muslims by the unbelievers. The treatment meted out to them was worse than slaughter.

[4] The words are too clear to need an explanation though they are often misinterpreted. Religion is for God when there is no persecution on the score of religion. The verse establishes the principle of perfect religious freedom under a Muslim government. The Holy Prophet made treaties with unbelievers who agreed not to persecute Muslims.

[5] i.e. You will ruin yourselves if you do not spend in the way of God.

[6] *Hajj* and *'umrah*, the latter of which is generally translated as *the minor pilgrimage*, but which may more correctly be rendered as the *visit*, differ slightly. The *'umrah* may be performed at any time, while the *Hajj* or *the pilgrimage proper* can only be performed at a particular time. Of the ceremonies connected with pilgrimage proper, the staying in the plain of Arafat is dispensed with in the case of the *'umrah*. The subject of pilgrimage is fittingly introduced here as the Muslims were unable to perform the pilgrimage so long as Mecca was in the hands of the enemies of Islam.

shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination; but whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, he (should effect) a redemption by fasting or alms or sacrificing; and when you are secure, whoever profits by combining the visit with the pilgrimage (should take) whatever offering is easy to obtain;[1] but he who cannot find (any offering) should fast for three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days when you return; these (make) ten (days) complete; this is for him whose family is not present in the Sacred Mosque, and be careful (of your duty) to God and know that God is severe in requiting (evil).

SECTION 25.—The Pilgrimage

197 The pilgrimage is (performed in) the well-known
months;[2] so whoever determines the performance of the
pilgrimage therein, there shall be no foul speech nor abusing
nor disputing in the pilgrimage; and whatever good you
do, God knows it; and make provision, for the benefit of
provision is the guarding of oneself,[3] and be careful (of
your duty) to Me, O men of understanding. 198 There
is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord,[4]
so when you hasten on from Arafat,[5] remember God near
the Holy Monument, and remember Him as He has guided
you, though before that you were certainly of the erring
ones. 199 Then hasten on from the place from which the
people hasten on[6] and ask the forgiveness of God; for

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[1] A combination of the *visit* and the *pilgrimage* means that after the performance of the *visit*, the pilgrim does not remain in the state of *ihrám*.

[2] I.e. *Shawwal*, *Ziqad*, and the first nine days of *Zilhajj*.

[3] By *provision* is meant *provision for the journey to Mecca*. Some men used to start for a pilgrimage to Mecca without sufficient means, on the pretence that they had their trust in God for their sustenance, and then resorted either to begging or to theft. It was to guard against this that the Muslims were commanded to have the necessary provision with them when they went on pilgrimage. The words may also signify: "but the best provision is guarding against evil."

[4] *Fadl* or *bounty* here stands for trading which the Muslims may resort to even during pilgrimage.

[5] The *Arafat* is the great plain, at a distance of about 12 miles from Mecca, where the pilgrims assemble on the afternoon of the 9th *Zilhajj*, and the holy monument is *Muzdalafa* where the pilgrims stop for the night when returning from the *Arafat*.

[6] The Quraish and some other tribes considered themselves nobler than other people and did not go to Arafat. Islam levelled all distinctions.

God is Forgiving, Merciful. 200 Then when you have performed your devotions, remember God as you remembered your fathers, nay, remember (Him) more reverently.[1] Yet there are some people who say, Our Lord! give us in this world, and they shall have no portion in the hereafter. 201 And there are some among them who say: Our Lord! grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter,[2] and save us from the chastisement of the fire! 202 They shall have (their) portion of what they have earned, and God is swift in reckoning. 203 And remember God during the numbered days; [3] then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no blame on him, and whoever remains behind, there is no blame on him; (this is) for him who guards (against evil), and be careful (of your duty) to God, and know that you shall be gathered together to Him. 204 And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes thee to wonder, and he calls on God to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries. 205 And when he turns back, he runs along in the land that he may cause mischief in it and destroy the tilth and the stock, and God does not love mischief-making. 206 And when it is said to him, Fear God, pride carries him off to sin; so hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting place. 207 And among men is he who gives himself away to seek the pleasure of God; and God is Affectionate to the servants. 208 O you who believe! enter into complete submission and do not follow the footsteps of the devil; for he is your open enemy. 209 But if you slip after clear arguments have come to you, then know that God is Mighty, Wise. 210 They do not wait aught but that God should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels, and the matter has (already) been decided; and to God are (all) affairs returned.[4]

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[1] In the days of ignorance they used to boast among themselves of the greatness of their fathers after they had performed the pilgrimage. They were told to glorify God instead.

[2] This is the middle course between materialism and monkery.

[3] I.e. the three days following 'Id.

[4] Compare 16 : 33 : "They do not wait aught, but that the angels should come to them, or that the commandment of thy Lord should come to pass." The coming of God thus stands for the execution of Divine punishment. See also 59 : 2 : "But God came to them whence they did not expect." A reference to 25 : 25 explains the shadow of clouds as also

SECTION 26.—Fighting was a necessity

211 Ask the Israelites how many a clear sign have We
given them;[1] and whoever changes the boon of God
after it has come to him, then God too is severe in requiting
(evil). 212 The life of this world is made to seem fair
to those who disbelieve, and they mock those who believe,
and those who guard (against evil) shall be above them
on the day of resurrection; and God gives means of sub-
sistence to whom He pleases without measure.[2] 213 (All)
people are a single nation; so God raised prophets bearing
good news and warning, and He revealed with them the
book with truth, that (the prophet) might judge between
people in that in which they differed; and none but the
very people who were given it differed about it after clear
arguments had come to them, out of mutual envy;
so God has guided by His will those who believe to the
truth about which they differed, and God guides whom He
pleases to the right path.[3] 214 Or do you think that
you would enter the garden[4] while yet the state of those
who have passed away before you has not come upon
you: distress and affliction befell them and they were
shaken violently, so that the Apostle and those who
believed with him said: When will the help of God come?
Now surely the help of God is nigh! 215 They ask thee
as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth

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the coming of angels: "And on the day when the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds and the angels shall be sent down a sending." It was a promise of the punishment that awaited the enemies of Islam as the words that follow there show: "And a hard day shall it be for the unbelievers." The heaven did actually burst asunder with clouds on the day of Badr when the angels were also sent down for punishment.

[1] I.e. signs showing the truth of the Holy Quran.

[2] The believers were mocked because they had lost all worldly resources, but they were promised unmeasured resources for their sacrifices in the cause of truth.

[3] The first part of this verse speaks of the universal law according to which prophets were raised among all nations, because all men are but one nation, and the same Divine law ought to apply to them all. The second part shows that these very nations among whom the prophets were sent disputed about the universal truth which was now being revealed to them through the Holy Quran. Such a revelation, we are told, was needed because differences had arisen which could only be settled by a Divine revelation. The concluding portion refers to the acceptance of truth by the Muslims.

[4] Entering the garden is achieving the great object of life which we are told cannot be achieved unless great sufferings are borne.

you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and whatever good you do, God surely knows it. 216 Fighting is enjoined on you, and it is an object of dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and God knows, while you do not know.[1]

SECTION 27.—Miscellaneous Questions

217 They ask thee concerning the sacred month—about fighting in it. Say: Fighting in it is a grave matter, and hindering (men) from God's way—and denying Him—and (from) the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it, are still graver with God, and persecution is graver than slaughter; and they will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can;[2] and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then he dies while an unbeliever—these it is whose works shall go for nothing in this world and the hereafter,[3] and they are the inmates of the fire: therein they shall abide.
218 Those who believe and those who fly (their home) and strive hard in the way of God—these hope for the mercy of God, and God is Forgiving, Merciful. 219 They ask thee about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: In both of them is great sin and (some) advantages for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage.[4] And

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[1] We are told here clearly that the Muslims were averse to fighting when they were told to fight even in self-defence. Why? It was their utter weakness and enormous disparity of numbers that made them dislike fighting. The whole of Arabia was bent on their extermination; even the Jews and the Christians had sided with the enemies of Islam.

[2] Here we are told that the enemies of Islam had taken up the sword to make the Muslims renounce their faith in Islam and the Muslims had to fight in self-defence. What a perversion of the truth that the Muslims had taken up the sword to impose their religion on the peaceful Arabs!

[3] To kill a man for changing his religion, even though he may turn away from Islam, is against the plain teachings of the Holy Quran.

[4] The prohibition of intoxicating liquors and games of chance, which is based here on the preponderance of the harm done by them to the slight advantage which may be gained from them sometimes, is made clear in 5:90, 91. Islam has thus boldly condemned the two evils which are sapping the foundations of modern civilization. It is one of the characteristics of Islam that it appeals to reason even in its injunctions. Shun intoxicants and games of chance, it says, because their harm is greater than their advantage.

they ask thee as to what they should spend. Say: What
you can spare. Thus does God make clear to you the
communications, that you may ponder 220 On this
world and the hereafter. And they ask thee concerning
the orphans. Say: To set right for them (their affairs) is
good, and if you become copartners with them, they are
your brethren; and God knows the mischief-maker from
the peace-maker; and if God had pleased, He would
certainly have caused you to fall into a difficulty, surely
God is Mighty, Wise. 221 And do not marry the idola-
tresses until they believe, and certainly a believing maid is
better than an idolatress even though she should please
you; and do not give (believing women) in marriage to
idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing
servant is better than an idolater, even though he should
please you; these invite to the fire,[1] and God invites
to the garden and to forgiveness by His will, and makes
clear His communications to men, that they may be
mindful.

SECTION 28.—Divorce

222 And they ask thee about menstruation. Say: It
is harmful;[2] so keep aloof from women during the men-
strual discharge and do not go near them until they have
become clean; then when they have cleansed themselves,
go in to them as God has commanded you; surely God
loves those who turn much (to Him), and He loves those
who purify themselves. 223 Your wives are a tilth for
you, so go in to your tilth when you like, and do good
beforehand for yourselves, and be careful (of your duty)
to God and know that you will meet Him, and give good
news to the believers. 224 And make not God, because
of your swearing (by Him), an obstacle to your doing
good and doing your duty and making peace between

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[1] The Jewish law prohibited intermarriages with all other people (Deut. 7 : 3, 4), and even Paul strictly prohibited intermarriages with all unbelievers (2 Cor. 6 : 14). The Islamic law offers an improvement on both the Jewish and the Christian laws, for it prohibits marriage with idolatresses only, marriage with women belonging to other religions being expressly allowed in 5 : 5.

[2] As the answer shows, the question relates to going in to women during the menstrual discharge. This is declared to be harmful. The subject is introduced as a preliminary to the subject of divorce.

men, and God is Hearing, Knowing.[1] 225 God does not
call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but
He will call you to account for what your hearts have
earned,[2] and God is Forgiving, Forbearing. 226 Those
who swear that they will not go in to their wives should
wait four months; then if they go back, God is surely
Forgiving, Merciful.[3] 227 And if they resolve on a
divorce,[4] surely God is Hearing, Knowing. 228 And the
divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for
three courses; and it is not lawful for them that they
should conceal what God has created in their wombs, if
they believe in God and the last day; and their husbands
have a better right to take them back in the meanwhile
if they wish for reconciliation;[5] and they have rights

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[1] The temporary separation between husband and wife referred to in v. 226 was brought about by an oath that one shall not go in to one's wife; hence the general prohibition to take oaths not to do one's duty or good to men.

[2] See 5 : 89, where fuller instructions are given.

[3] In the days of ignorance the Arabs used to take such oaths frequently, and as the period of suspension was not limited, the wife was compelled sometimes to pass her whole life in bondage, having neither the position of a wife nor that of a divorced woman free to marry elsewhere. The law of the Quran declares that if the husband does not reassert conjugal relations within four months, the wife shall be divorced. See next verse.

[4] The chief features of the Islamic law of divorce, as dealt with in the Holy Quran, will be noticed under the particular verses dealing with them. Here I may state that the Islamic law has many points of advantage as compared with both the Jewish and Christian laws as formulated in Deuteronomy and Matthew. The chief feature of improvement is that the wife can claim a divorce according to the Islamic law, neither Moses nor Christ conferring that right on the woman. Another feature is that it is elastic and does not strictly limit the causes of divorce. In fact, if the civilized nations of Europe and America who own the same religion, are at the same stage of advancement, and have an affinity of feeling on most social and moral questions, cannot agree as to the causes of divorce, how could a universal religion like Islam, which was meant for all ages and all countries, for people in the lowest grade of civilization as well as those at the top, limit those causes, which must vary with the varying conditions of humanity and society.

It may also be added here that, though divorce is allowed by Islam if sufficient cause exists, yet the right is to be exercised under exceptional circumstances. The Quran itself approves of the Holy Prophet insisting on Zaid not to divorce his wife notwithstanding a dissension of a sufficiently long standing (33 : 37). And the Holy Prophet's memorable words, *of all the things which have been permitted to men divorce is the most hated by God*, will always act as a strong check on any loose interpretation of the words of the Holy Quran.

[5] The period of waiting is really a period of temporary separation, during which conjugal relations may be re-established. This period of temporary separation serves as a check upon divorce. If there is any

similar to those against them in a just manner,[1] and the men are a degree above them,[2] and God is Mighty, Wise.

SECTION 29.—Divorce

229 Divorce may be (pronounced) twice;[3] then keep
(them) in good fellowship or let (them) go with kindness;
and it is not lawful for you to take any part of what you
have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep
within the limits of God; so if you fear that they cannot
keep within the limits of God, there is no blame on them
for what she gives up to become free thereby.[4] These
are the limits of God, so do not exceed them, and whoever
exceeds the limits of God, these it is that are unjust.
230 Then if he divorces her,[5] she shall not be lawful to
him afterwards until she marries another husband; if he
too divorces her there is no blame on them both if they
return to each other (by marriage), if they think that they
can keep within the limits of God,[6] and these are the limits

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love in the union, its pangs would assert themselves during the period of temporary separation, bringing about a reconciliation, and the differences would sink into insignificance.

[1] The rights of women against their husbands are here stated to be similar to those which the husbands have against their wives. The statement must, no doubt, have caused a stir in a society which never recognized any rights for the woman. The change in this respect was really a revolutionizing one, for the Arabs hitherto regarded women as mere chattels, and now women were given a position equal in all respects to that of men, for they were declared to have rights similar to those which were exercised against them. The equality of the rights of women with those of men was never previously recognized by any nation or any reformer.

[2] The reason is given in 4 : 34 : "Men are the maintainers of women, because God has made some of them to excel others, and because they spend out of their property."

[3] This refers to the revocable divorce of the last verse. In the days of ignorance a man used to divorce his wife and take her back within the prescribed time, even though he might do this a thousand times. Islam reformed this practice by allowing a revocable divorce twice.

[4] This verse gives the wife a right to claim a divorce. Among the religions of the world it is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Islam that it gives the wife the same right to claim a divorce as it gives the husband to pronounce one, if she is willing to forgo the whole or part of her dowry. Technically such a divorce is called *khula'*.

[5] When there has been a divorce and a restitution of conjugal rights twice, and divorce is pronounced a third time, it becomes irrevocable.

[6] After the irrevocable divorce is pronounced, the husband cannot remarry the divorced wife until she has been married elsewhere and divorced. The verse abolishes the immoral custom of *halálah*, or temporary marriage gone through with no other object than that of legalizing the divorced wife for the first husband, a custom prevalent in the days of

of God which He makes clear for a people who know. 231 And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time, then either retain them in good fellowship or set them free with liberality, and do not retain them for injury,[1] so that you exceed the limits, and whoever does this, he indeed is unjust to his own soul; and do not take God's communications for a mockery, and remember the favour of God upon you, and that which He has revealed to you of the Book and of wisdom, admonishing you thereby; and be careful of (your duty to) God, and know that God is the Knower of all things.

SECTION 30.—Remarriage

232 And when you have divorced women and they have ended their term (of waiting), do not prevent them from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner;[2] with this is admonished he among you who believes in God and the last day; this is more profitable and purer for you; and God knows while you do not know. 233 And the mothers should suckle their children for two whole years for him who desires to make complete the time of suckling; and their maintenance and their clothing must be borne by the father according to usage; no soul shall have imposed upon it a duty but to the extent of its capacity; neither shall a mother be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor a father on account of his child, and a similar duty (devolves) on the (father's) heir; but if both desire weaning by mutual consent and counsel, there is no blame on them; and if you wish to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you so long as you pay what you promised for according to usage; and be careful of (your duty to) God and know that God sees what you do. 234 And (as for) those of you who die and leave wives behind, they should keep themselves in waiting

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ignorance, but abolished by the Holy Prophet, according to a report which speaks of his having cursed those who indulge in this evil practice. There must be a genuine marriage and a genuine divorce.

[1] Hence if the husband is proved to injure his wife, he cannot retain her, and she can claim a divorce.

[2] Thus the divorced woman can not only remarry, but even remarry her former husband. Such remarriage is, however, allowed only twice: see v. 229.

for four months and ten days; then when they have fully attained their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner;[1] and God is aware of what you do. 235 And there is no blame on you respecting that which you speak indirectly in asking (such) women in marriage or keep (the proposal) concealed within your minds; God knows that you will mention them, but do not give them a promise in secret unless you speak in a lawful manner, and do not confirm the marriage tie until the writing reaches its end;[2] and know that God knows what is in your minds, therefore beware of Him, and know that God is Forgiving, Forbearing.

SECTION 31.—Provision for Women

236 There is no blame on you if you divorce women when you have not touched them[3] or appointed for them a portion, and make provision for them, the wealthy according to his means and the straitened in circumstances according to his means, a provision according to usage; (this is) a duty on the doers of good. 237 And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have appointed for them a portion, then (pay to them) half of what you have appointed, unless they relinquish or he relinquishes in whose hand is the marriage tie, and it is nearer to righteousness that you should relinquish; and do not neglect the giving of free gifts between you, for God sees what you do. 238 Be mindful of prayers and the middle prayer,[4] and stand up truly obedient to God. 239 But if you are in danger, then (say your prayers) on foot or on horseback; and when you are secure, remember God as He has taught you what you did not know.[5] 240 And those of you who die and leave wives behind, should make a bequest in favour of their wives of maintenance for a year without turning (them)

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[1] I.e. a widow may look out for a husband and remarry.

[2] By *the writing* is meant the period of waiting *written* down for women.

[3] I.e. consummated marriage.

[4] The middle prayer is the *'Asr* or later afternoon prayer.

[5] So attention should be given regularly to prayers even though facing the enemy, though it is not necessary to observe the formalities in that case. Thus there is a reversion to the subject of fighting in vv. 238, 239.

out,[1] but if they themselves go away, there is no blame on you for what they do of lawful deeds by themselves, and God is Mighty, Wise. 241 And for the divorced women, provision (must be made) according to usage; (this is) a duty on the righteous. 242 God thus makes clear to you His communications that you may understand.

SECTION 32.—Necessity of Fighting

243 Hast thou not considered those who went forth from their homes, and they were thousands, for fear of death;[2] then God said to them: Die; again He gave them life;[3] surely God is Gracious to people, but most people do not give thanks. 244 And fight in the way of God, and know that God is Hearing, Knowing. 245 Who is it that will set apart for God a goodly portion, so He will multiply it to him manifold, and God straitens and amplifies, and you shall be returned to Him. 246 Hast thou not considered the chiefs of the children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs: Raise up for us a king, that we may fight in the way of God.[4] He said: May it not be that you would not fight if fighting is ordained for you? They said: And what reason have we that we should not fight in the way of God and we

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[1] Neither v. 235, nor 4:12, contains anything contradicting this verse. V. 235 states the period of waiting for a widow to be four months and ten days, while this verse speaks of a year's residence and maintenance, adding that if the widow of her own accord leaves the house . . . she is not entitled to any further concession. As regards 4:12, the fourth or eighth part of the property of the deceased husband is hers in addition to what she obtains under this verse, and 4:12 plainly says that anything which is to be paid under a will shall have precedence of the division of property into shares under that verse. Not being opposed to any other verse there is nothing to justify us in considering this as an abrogated verse.

[2] The reference is to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt who no doubt left Egypt for fear of extermination or death at the hands of Pharaoh. A reference to v. 246 corroborates this.

[3] See 5:21–26. After coming out from Egypt Moses told them to enter the Holy Land, but they refused and were made to wander about in the wilderness, so that that generation perished. This was God's command to them, "Die." And he again gave them life by making the next generation inherit the promised land. The next verse shows that the refusal to fight in the cause of truth is referred to here.

[4] The prophet alluded to is Samuel: "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us . . . that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:19, 20).

have indeed been expelled from our homes and (deprived of) our children.[1] But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them, and God knows the unjust. 247 And their prophet said to them: God has raised Saul to be a king over you. They said: How can he hold kingship over us while we have a greater right to kingship than he, and he has not been granted an abundance of wealth? He said: God has chosen him in preference to you and He has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique, and God grants His kingdom to whom He pleases, and God is Ample-giving, Knowing. 248 And their prophet said to them: The sign of his kingdom is that there shall come to you the heart in which there is tranquillity from your Lord and the best of what the followers of Moses and the followers of Aaron have left, the angels bearing it;[2] surely there is a sign in this for you if you are believers.

SECTION 33.—**Necessity of Fighting**

249 When Saul departed with the forces, he said: God will try you with a river; whoever drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is of me, except he who takes with his hand as much of it

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[1] 1 Sam. 15 : 33 shows that the Amalekites had killed the children of Israel, while 1 Sam. 17 : 1 shows that they had taken lands which belonged to Judah.

[2] Translations of the Quran give here *ark* instead of *heart* as in my rendering. The word in the original is *tábút* which has a two-fold significance. It means a *chest* or a *box*, and it also signifies *the bosom* or *the heart*. Taking the first significance, the reference is said to be to the *ark*, to which, however, it is objected that the ark was restored to the Israelites long before the time of Saul. But we cannot be so certain of the Bible narrative as to reject as untrue everything differing from it. I prefer, however, the latter significance, as it is favoured by the context, for the heart, and not a chest, is the repository of tranquillity. On five other occasions the coming down of *sakinah*, or *tranquillity*, is mentioned in the Holy Quran, and every time it is *the heart of the Prophet* or *the faithful* that is the recipient of it.

By the coming of "the heart in which there is tranquillity" is meant the change which came over Saul when he was made king: "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart" (1 Sam. 10 : 9); "And the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied" (1 Sam. 10 : 10). This is no doubt the best of what the true followers of Moses and Aaron left. Again the ark of 1 Sam. 4 : 4 was drawn by bullocks and not by angels, and since, according to the Holy Quran, the bearers of the *tábút* were angels, it is additional reason that by the *tábút* here is meant *the heart*.

as fills the hand.[1] But with the exception of a few of them they drank from it. And when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him—they said: We have to-day no power against Goliath and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by God's permission, and God is with the patient.
250 And when they went out against Goliath and his forces, they said: Our Lord! pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm and help us against the unbelieving people. 251 So they put them to flight by God's permission. And David slew Goliath, and God gave him kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for God's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but God is Gracious to the creatures.
252 These are the communications of God: We recite them to thee with truth; and surely thou art (one) of the apostles.

PART III

253 We have made some of these apostles to excel others; among them are they to whom God spoke, and some of them He exalted by (many) degrees of rank; and We gave clear arguments to Jesus son of Mary, and strengthened him with the holy spirit.[2] And if God had

[1] "The story of Saul is here confounded with that of Gideon"—such is the judgment of the Christian critic, and for this the Quran is called a "ridiculous jumble."

I fail to see what confusion there is. All that the Holy Quran states is that Saul tried his forces by a river, and the Bible does not say anything about it. On the other hand, the Bible speaks of a trial of a somewhat similar nature by Gideon (Judges 7 : 1–6), while the Quran does not speak of Gideon at all. Neither the Holy Quran nor the Bible claims to be a full and detailed record of the whole history of the Israelite nation, and a simple and natural explanation of the statements made in the two Holy Books is that Saul followed the example of Gideon.

[2] The principle is here recognized that some apostles excel others, and it contains, apparently, a reference to the excellence of the Holy Prophet. The mention of David and Jesus in particular here is to show that, notwithstanding that these two prophets represented two different aspects of the advancement of the Israelite nation, David standing for their worldly eminence and Jesus for their spiritual eminence, they both sang praises of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and both spoke of his advent as that of God Himself, thus indicating that, looked at from both standpoints, the excellence of the Holy Prophet over other prophets was so immeasurable as to have led two of the most eminent Israelite prophets to speak of him as the Lord.

pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them, but they disagreed; so there were some of them who believed and others who denied; and if God had pleased they would not have fought one with another, but God brings about what He intends.

SECTION 34.—Great Power of God

254 O you who believe! spend out of what We have
given you before the day comes in which there is no bar-
gaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the
unbelievers are unjust. 255 God is He besides Whom
there is no god, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by
whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor
sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the
earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but
by His permission? [1] He knows what is before them
and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend
anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases;
His knowledge [2] extends over the heavens and the earth,
and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and
He is the Most High, the Great. 256 There is no com-
pulsion in religion; [3] indeed the right way has become

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[1] The principle is here recognized that there may be intercession with Divine permission. It is true that Islam does not recognize the doctrine that man stands in need of any mediator to reconcile him with God, and therefore mediation or intercession in the sense in which the Christian doctrine is held is unknown to Islam. But there is another aspect of it. The Prophet, to whom the Divine will is revealed, is the Model for his people. He is perfect, and by pointing out a way enables others to attain to perfection. In this sense he is called a *shafi'* or *an Intercessor*. Those who take the Prophet for their model may thus attain to perfection, which is the real meaning of salvation in Islam. But as all men are not equally gifted, nor have all equal occasion to attain to a state of perfection, although they have exerted themselves to their utmost, Divine mercy will take them by the hand and amends will be made for such defects through the intercession of the Holy Prophet who has served for a model to his followers. It is in this sense that Islam recognizes the doctrine of intercession in the life after death.

[2] *Kursi* means *knowledge*; see Bukhari. This verse is known as the *âyat-ul-Kursî*, and it gives an assurance to the Muslims that they shall be made a living and powerful nation.

[3] To all the nonsense which is being talked about the Prophet offering Islam and sword as alternatives to the pagan Arabs, this verse is a sufficient answer. The verse was no doubt revealed later than that which has already preceded with respect to fighting in the way of God with those who fought against the Muslims. The Muslims may have to fight but they cannot compel anybody to accept their religion.

clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in God, he has laid hold on the firmest handle, which shall not break off, and God is Hearing, Knowing. 257 God is the guardian of those who believe: He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are the devils who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide.

SECTION 35.—The Dead are raised to Life

258 Hast thou not considered him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had given him the kingdom? When Abraham said, My Lord is He who gives life and causes to die, he said: I give life and cause death. Abraham said: But God causes the sun to rise from the east, so make it rise from the west; thus he who disbelieved was confounded; and God does not guide aright the unjust people. 259 Or the like of him who passed by a town which had fallen down upon its roofs; he said: When will God give it life after its death? So God caused him to remain in a state of death for a hundred years, then roused him, (and) He said: How long hast thou tarried? He said: I have tarried a day, or a part of a day. Said He: Nay! thou hast tarried a hundred years; but look at thy food and drink—years have not passed over it; and look at thy ass; and that We may make thee a sign to the people, and look at the bones, how We set them together, then clothe them with flesh; so when it became clear to him, he said: I know that God has power over all things.[1] 260 And when

[1] The reference here is to the vision of Ezekiel; see Ezek. Ch. 37. The town is Jerusalem which lay desolate at the time on account of Nebuchadnezzar's attack in 599 B.C. The prophet Ezekiel was made to see a vision to the effect that it would be restored to life; see Ezek. 37: 1–10: "The bones came together, bone to his bone . . and the sinews and the flesh came upon them . . . the breath came into them and they lived." This is exactly what the Holy Quran says. But it mentions in addition that the prophet in his vision remained in a state of death for a hundred years, which was to show that Jerusalem shall remain in a state of desolation for a hundred years. The rebuilding of the city began in 537 B.C. under orders from Cyrus, and it is said to have been completed in 515 B.C., while we can easily guess that another fifteen years may have been taken to settle there. Thus was the prophet a sign to his people.

Abraham said, My Lord! show me how Thou givest life to the dead? He said: What! and dost thou not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Take four birds, then train them to follow thee, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to thee flying; and know that God is Mighty, Wise.[1]

SECTION 36.—Reward of Charity

261 The parable of those who spend their property in the way of God is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in every ear; and God multiplies for whom He pleases; and God is Ample-giving, Knowing.[2] 262 (As for) those who spend their property in the way of God, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. 263 Kind speech and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury; and God is Self-sufficient, Forbearing. 264 O you who believe! do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his property to be seen of men and does not believe in God and the last day; so his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with earth upon it, then a heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it bare; they shall not be able to gain anything of what they have earned; and God does not guide the unbelieving people. 265 And the parable of those who spend their property to seek the pleasure of God and for the certainty of their souls is as the parable of a garden on an elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls, so it brings forth its fruit twofold; but if heavy rain does not fall upon it, then light rain (is

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[1] The answer to Abraham's *how* as given in the Quran is a perfectly intelligible parable. If he should take four birds and tame them, they would obey his call and fly to him even from the distant mountains. If the birds, then, obey his call, he being neither their master nor the author of their existence, would not nations submit to the call of their Divine Master and the Author of their existence? Or if the birds, being only tamed for a short time by a man who had otherwise no control over them, become so obedient to their tamer, has not God the power to control all those causes which govern the life and death of nations?

[2] Compare Matt. 13:23, Mk. 4:8. For the Quranic seven hundred-fold or any multiple of that we find Jesus promising a hundred-fold at the utmost.

sufficient); and God sees what you do. 266 Does one of you like to have a garden of palms and vines with streams flowing in it, having in it all kinds of fruits, and old age has overtaken him and he has weak offspring, when, (lo!) a whirlwind with fire in it smites it and it becomes blasted; thus does God make the communications clear to you that you may reflect.

SECTION 37.—What Charity is profitable

267 O you who believe! give in charity of the good things that you earn and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at giving what is bad in charity, while you would not take it yourselves unless you connive at it, and know that God is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy.[1] 268 The devil threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly, and God promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance; and God is Ample-giving, Knowing, 269 He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good; and none mind but men of understanding. 270 And whatever alms you give or (whatever) vow you vow, God knows it; and the unjust shall have no helpers. 271 If you give alms openly, it is well, and if you hide it and give it to the poor, it is better for you;[2] and this will do away with some of your evil deeds; and God is aware of what you do. 272 To make them walk in the right way is not incumbent on thee, but God guides aright whom He pleases;[3] and whatever good thing you spend, it is to your own good; and you do not spend

[1] The last section speaks of the good fruit which a man may reap by spending money in the cause of truth; this one tells us what to spend and how to spend. The first condition is that what is given in the way of God must have been earned lawfully; the second that it must not be a worthless thing.

[2] By the giving of alms openly is meant the giving of subscriptions for works of public utility or for national defence, or for the advancement of the national or public welfare. The teaching of the Gospels (Matt. 6 : 1–4) is really defective, because it lays all the stress upon private acts of charity and makes no mention at all of subscriptions for works of public utility and for organized efforts for the help of the poor, without which national growth is impossible.

[3] The principle laid down here is that the charity of a Muslim is not to be limited to the Muslims. The Holy Prophet and his companions cared for the indigent of all religions alike.

but to seek God's pleasure; and whatever good things
you spend shall be paid back to you in full, and you shall
not be wronged. 273 (Alms are) for the poor who are
confined in the way of God—they cannot go about in
the land; the ignorant man thinks them to be rich on
account of (their) abstaining (from begging); thou canst
recognize them by their mark; they do not beg from
men importunately; and whatever good thing you spend,
God knows it.

SECTION 38.—**Usury prohibited**

274 (As for) those who spend their property by night
and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their
reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor
shall they grieve. 275 Those who swallow down usury
cannot arise except as one whom the devil has prostrated
by (his) touch does rise. This is because they say, Trading
is only like usury; and God has allowed trading and for-
bidden usury.[1] To whomsoever then the admonition has
come from his Lord, and he desists, he shall have what
has already passed, and his affair is in (the hands of) God;
and whoever returns (to it)—these are the inmates of the
fire: in it they shall abide. 276 God does not bless
usury, and He causes charitable deeds to prosper, and
God does not love any ungrateful sinner. 277 Those
who believe and do good deeds and keep up prayer and
pay the poor-rate—they shall have their reward from
their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they
grieve. 278 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty
to) God and relinquish what remains (due) from usury,
if you are believers. 279 But if you do (it) not, then be
apprised of war from God and His Apostle, and if you
repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall
you make (the debtor) suffer loss, nor shall you be made to
suffer loss. 280 And if (the debtor) is in straitness, then

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[1] In the great struggle which is going on in the world between capital and labour, Islam sides with labour and honours it. This is the underlying idea in the prohibition of usury. Moreover, usury degenerates man morally, generating in him inordinate love of money to which reference is contained in the opening words of the verse. The prohibition of usury is also one of the means by which Islam remedies the unequal distribution of wealth.

let there be postponement until (he is in) ease; and if
you remit (it) as alms, it is better for you, if you knew.
281 And guard yourselves against a day in which you
shall be returned to God; then every soul shall be paid
back in full what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt
with unjustly.

SECTION 39.—**Business Transactions**

282 O you who believe! when you deal with each
other in contracting a debt for a fixed time, write it down,[1]
and let a scribe write it down between you with fairness;
and the scribe should not refuse to write; as God has
taught him, so he should write; and let him who owes
the debt dictate, and he should be careful of (his duty
to) God, his Lord, and not diminish anything from it;
but if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding
or weak, or (if) he is not able to dictate, let his guardian
dictate with fairness,[2] and call in to witness from among
your men two witnesses;[3] but if there are not two men,
then one man and two women from among those whom
you choose to be witnesses; so that if one of the two
(women) errs, the other may remind her; and the wit-
nesses should not refuse when they are summoned; and
be not averse to writing it (whether it is) small or large,
with the time of its falling due; this is more equitable
in the sight of God and assures greater accuracy in testi-
mony, and the nearest (way) that you may not entertain
doubts (afterwards), except when it is ready merchandise
which you give and take among yourselves from hand to
hand; in that case there is no blame on you in not writing
it down; and have witnesses when you barter with one
another, and let no harm be done to the scribe or to the

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[1] The subject of usury, which is connected with the lending and borrowing of money and trading in general, brings us to business transactions. If Islam enjoins charitableness and prohibits usury, it requires at the same time that the greatest precautions must be taken for safeguarding property rights.

[2] These words form the basis of the Guardian and Ward law, as they point out when a guardian may be appointed for one who is not able to manage his own property, whether such disability is due to minority or to old age or weakness of understanding. The word which I have translated as *weak* really signifies *one too young* (i.e. a minor) or *too old*.

[3] It is not meant that no decision can be given unless there are two witnesses; generally it is preferable to have two witnesses.

witness; and if you do (it), then it will be a transgression
in you, and be careful of (your duty to) God, and God
teaches you, and God knows all things. 283 And if you
are upon a journey and you do not find a scribe, then
a security may be taken into possession; but if one
of you trusts another, then he who is trusted should
deliver his trust, and let him be careful of (his duty to)
God, his Lord; and do not conceal testimony, and whoever
conceals it, his heart is sinful; and God knows what
you do.

SECTION 40.—**Triumph of Islam**

284 Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in
the earth is God's; and whether you manifest what is in
your minds or hide it, God will call you to account for
it; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise
whom He pleases, and God has power over all things.
285 The apostle believes in what has been revealed to
him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all
believe in God and His angels and His books and His
apostles: we make no difference between any of His
apostles;[1] and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord!
Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual
coming. 286 God does not impose upon any soul a duty
but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of)
what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has
wrought: Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or
make a mistake; our Lord! do not lay on us a burden
as Thou didst lay on those before us; our Lord! do not
impose upon us that which we have not the strength to
bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have
mercy on us, Thou art our Patron; so help us against
the unbelieving people.[2]

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[1] The broadness of the Muslim doctrine is referred to here to show that it must triumph in the end. But note that the words "we make no difference between any of His apostles" only refer to the truth of the apostles, or to their being raised by God, and not to their being all equal in degree or excellence, for which see v. 253.

[2] The end of the chapter shows that the triumph of Islam is its real object, and this is plainly outlined in the opening and closing sections of the chapter.

CHAPTER 3

ĀL-I-'IMRĀN: THE FAMILY OF AMRAN

(*Medina—20 sections; 199 verses*)

THE name of this chapter is taken from the mention of Amran (Moses' father) in verse 32. It deals chiefly with Christianity, Jesus Christ being the last prophet of the Mosaic dispensation.

The first section, while referring to the Christian doctrine, lays down the rule that allegorical statements in a Divine revelation must be interpreted in such a manner as not to contradict the clear principles of religion, the Christian religion being based really on the wrong interpretation of certain allegorical statements. The second section asserts the unity of God which is laid down as the clear basis of all religions, and its ultimate triumph is predicted. The third section refers to the departure of the spiritual kingdom from the house of Israel, and the last members of that chosen race are mentioned in the fourth. Among these is Jesus, various misconceptions regarding whom necessitate rather a lengthy discussion in the two sections that follow. The seventh section invites the Christians to principles common to the two religions, and thus lays the basis of a comparative study of religions, while the eighth deals with machinations to discredit Islam. The ninth speaks of the testimony of previous books and prophets to the truth of Islam, while the tenth mentions the ever-living testimony afforded by the Kaba, the centre of Islam. This is followed by an exhortation in the following section to the Muslims to remain united if they would achieve triumph, and in view of the coming conflicts they are told in the next to have guarded relations with the Jews, who, while outwardly friendly, were inwardly hostile to the Muslims. The incidents of the battle of Uhud, the causes of the misfortune experienced in it, and how triumph can be obtained are the points discussed from the thirteenth section to the end, with only a reference in the last section but one to the Jewish carpings.

This chapter is closely connected with the last, and the two supplement and explain each other. The 2nd chapter deals with a controversy with the Jews, while this deals with a controversy with the Christians. The second gave the Muslims permission to fight in self-defence, and this one deals with the incidents of the battle of Uhud, showing that though the Muslims may be humiliated for a time yet they cannot be vanquished.

The whole of this chapter was revealed at Medina, and it is generally supposed to be the second or the third in order in the Medina revelation. The latter portion, from section 13 almost to the end, distinctly relates the incidents of the battle of Uhud, and therefore the third year of Hejira may be fixed as the date of its revelation. As to the first portion, it may have been revealed a little earlier or about the same time, and the suggestion that it was revealed on the visit of the Najran deputation in the tenth year of Hejira is evidently erroneous. Probably only v. 60 was revealed then.

SECTION 1.—The Book and its Interpretation

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower, 2 God, (there is) no god
but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by whom all
things subsist.[1] 3 He has revealed to thee the Book with
truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed
the Torah and the Gospel aforetime, a guidance for the
people, and He sent the Distinction.[2] Those who dis-
believe in the communications of God shall have a severe
chastisement; and God is Mighty, the Lord of retribution.
4 God—nothing in the earth or in the heaven is hidden
from Him. 5 He it is who shapes you in the wombs
as He likes; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.
6 He it is who has revealed the Book to thee; some of
its verses are decisive—they are the basis of the Book, and
others are allegorical; then as for those in whose hearts
there is perversity, they follow the part of it which is
allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it
(their own) interpretation; but none knows its interpreta-
tion except God and those well-grounded in knowledge—
they say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord;[3]
and none mind except those having understanding.
7 Our Lord! make not our hearts to deviate after Thou

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[1] The attributes, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting, as stated in this verse, deal a death-blow to the doctrine of Divinity of Jesus Christ, which is also controverted in the verses that follow, the same subject being continued up to v. 83.

[2] The word in the original is *Furqan* which is one of the names by which the Holy Quran is known. It means that which affords a distinction between what is right and what is wrong; and this name is adopted here to show that certain errors had crept into the previous scriptures and that the Quran was needed to distinguish the right from the wrong in them.

[3] The Quran, we are here told, establishes certain principles in clear words which are to be taken as the basis, while there are statements made in allegorical words or susceptible of different meanings, the interpretation of which must be in consonance with the other parts and the spirit of the Book. In fact, this is true of every writing. When a certain law is laid down in a book in unmistakable words, any statement carrying a doubtful significance, or one which is apparently opposed to the law so laid down, must be interpreted in the light of the principle enunciated. The subject is very appropriately dealt with here as a prelude to a controversy with the Christians, who attribute divinity to Jesus and uphold the doctrine of atonement by blood on the basis of certain ambiguous words or allegorical statements, without heeding the fundamental principles established by the earlier prophets. The words *it is all from our Lord* signify that there is no disagreement between the various portions of the Holy Book, because the word of the all-knowing Lord cannot be self-contradictory.

hast guided us aright, and grant us mercy from Thee ; for
Thou art the most liberal Giver. 8 Our Lord ! Thou
art the Gatherer of men on a day about which there is no
doubt ; surely God will not fail (His) promise.

SECTION 2.—Unity is the basis of all Religions

9 Those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their
children shall avail them in the least against God, and these
it is who are the fuel of the fire, 10 After the manner
of the people of Pharaoh and those before them ; they
rejected Our communications, so God seized them on
account of their sins and God is severe in requiting (evil).
11 Say to those who disbelieve : You shall be vanquished,
and driven together to hell ; and evil is the resting-place.
12 Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which)
met together in encounter ; one party fighting in the way
of God and the other unbelieving, whom they saw twice
as many as themselves with the sight of the eye ; [1] and
God strengthens with His aid whom He pleases ; surely
there is a lesson in this for those who have sight. 13 The
love of desires, of women and sons and hoarded treasures
of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and
tilth, is made to seem fair to men ; this is the provision
of the life of this world ; and God is He with Whom is the
good goal (of life). 14 Say : Shall I tell you of what is
better than these ? For those who guard (against evil)
are gardens with their Lord, in which rivers flow,
to abide in them, and pure mates and God's pleasure ;
and God sees the servants. 15 Those who say : Our
Lord ! we believe, therefore forgive us our faults and keep
us from the chastisement of the fire ; 16 The patient,
and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend in
charity and those who ask forgiveness in the morning times.
17 God bears witness that there is no god but He, and

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[1] The reference here is to the battle of Badr. The meaning is that the Muslims saw the unbelievers to be twice as many as themselves. The actual strength of the two parties was : unbelievers about 1,000, Muslims 313. The Muslims saw only six hundred of the enemy, the rest being hidden behind a mountain. The Muslims had a promise that if they persevered they would overcome double their number (8 : 66). The battle of Badr was a sign of the truth of the Prophet, not only because of the prophecies of victory contained in the Quran, but also because of the clear prophecy in Isaiah ; see Isa. 21 : 13–17.

(so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge,
being maintainer of justice; there is no god but He, the
Mighty, the Wise. 18 The (true) religion with God is
Islam,[1] and those to whom the Book had been given did
not differ but after knowledge had come to them, out
of envy among themselves; and whoever disbelieves
in the communications of God, then surely God is quick
in reckoning. 19 But if they dispute with thee, say:
I have submitted myself entirely to God and (so) every
one who follows me; and say to those who have been
given the Book and the unlearned people: Do you submit
yourselves?[2] If they submit, then indeed they follow
the right way; and if they turn back, then upon thee is
only the delivery of the message and God sees the servants.

SECTION 3.—The Kingdom of God comes

20 Those who disbelieve in the communications of
God and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among
men who enjoin justice—announce to them a painful
chastisement. 21 These are they whose works come to
nought in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have
no helpers. 22 Hast thou not considered those who are
given a portion of the book?[3] They are invited to the
Book of God that it might decide between them, then a
part of them turn back and they withdraw. 23 This is
because they say: The fire shall not touch us but for a
few days; and what they have forged deceives them in
the matter of their religion. 24 But how will it be when
We shall gather them together on a day about which
there is no doubt, and every soul shall be fully paid
what it has earned, and they shall not be dealt with
unjustly? 25 Say: O God! Possessor of the kingdom!
Thou givest the kingdom to whomsoever Thou pleasest
and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou
pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and
abasest whom Thou pleasest; in Thine hand is the good;

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[1] Islam literally means *submission* or *to enter into peace*. Islam is therefore the religion of entire submission to God, and the man who accepts that religion enters into peace.

[2] By *unlearned* people are meant *the Arabs*.

[3] Because much of the scriptures given to them had already been lost.

surely, Thou hast power over all things.[1] 26 Thou makest the night to pass into the day and Thou makest the day to pass into the night, and Thou bringest forth the living from the dead and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living, and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest without measure. 27 Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than believers;[2] and whoever does this, he shall have nothing of (the guardianship of) God, except that you guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully;[3] and God makes you cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and to God is the eventual coming. 28 Say: Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, God knows it, and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and God has power over all things. 29 On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time; and God makes you to be cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and God is Compassionate to the servants.

SECTION 4.—Last Members of a Chosen Race

30 Say: If you love God then follow me, God will love you, and forgive you your faults, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.[4] 31 Say: Obey God and the Apostle; but if they turn back, then indeed God does not love the un-

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[1] This verse and the one that follows are the essence of the whole section. The advent of Islam was the advent of the Kingdom of God of which Jesus had spoken. And there is also a reference to Matt. 21:43: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This was the Muslim nation.

[2] The Muslims, being in a state of war with the unbelievers, were forbidden to take their enemies for friends. The clear statement made in 60:8, 9 settles the point beyond all doubt: "God does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly. God only forbids you respecting those who made war upon you on account of your religion and drove you forth from your homes and backed up (others) in your expulsion, that you make friends with them."

[3] This is a new sentence. It is as if it were said: *Do not look to them for guarding your interests, rather guard yourselves against them.*

[4] The love of God is the great goal of life to which Islam leads. Compare John 14:15, 16 and John 15:10. The Jews and the Christians are told that Islam could make them attain that love of God which should make them the beloved of God.

believers. 32 Surely God chose Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of Amran [1] above the nations, 33 Offspring one of the other; and God is Hearing, Knowing. 34 When a woman of Amran said: [2] My Lord! I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); accept therefore from me; for Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. 35 And when she gave birth to it, she said: My Lord! I have brought it forth a female [3]—and God knew best what she had given birth to—and the male is not like the female, and I have named it Mary, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed devil.[4] 36 So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing, and gave her into the charge of Zacharias; whenever Zacharias entered the sanctuary to (see) her, he found food with her. He said: O Mary! whence comes this to thee? She said: It is from God; for God gives to whom He pleases without measure.[5] 37 There did Zacharias pray to his Lord, saying: My Lord! grant me from Thyself good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of prayer. 38 Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: That

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[1] The *Imran* of the Holy Quran is the same as the Amran of the Bible. The descendants of Amran are Moses and Aaron. Moses became the founder of the Israelite law and Aaron the head of the Israelite priesthood. The last of this race were John and Jesus, and their parents, viz. Zacharias and Mary, are mentioned first.

[2] *Imra'at* means *a woman* and also *a wife*. I take *Imra'at-u-Imran* as meaning *a woman of the family of Amran*. It should be borne in mind that the name of a great ancestor is frequently used to indicate the nation which has sprung from him. Thus Kedar stands for the Ishmaelites and Israel for the Israelites. This interpretation is in perfect accord with what is said in the previous verse as to the election of the descendants of Amran. See also note on 19 : 28. If the other significance is adopted, Amran here would be the name of Mary's father, not of the father of Moses. In either case there is no anachronism.

[3] A female could not do the priestly work to which she had dedicated the child.

[4] It is noteworthy that Mary's mother, while praying for Mary, also prays for her *offspring*, which shows that when she dedicated her daughter to the Temple she had never an idea that she would remain a *virgin* all her life. On the other hand, she entertained the hope that Mary would become a wife and a mother. Commending her and her offspring to Divine protection from the devil does not amount to creating her or them sinless. The words used are the same as a Muslim uses many times a day before saying *Bismillah*: I seek the protection of God from the accursed devil.

[5] Evidently food was brought to her by those who paid visits to the sanctuary.

God gives thee the good news of John, verifying a word from God,[1] and honourable and chaste and a prophet from among the good ones. 39 He said: My Lord! how shall there be a son (born) to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren? He said: Even thus does God what He pleases. 40 He said: My Lord! appoint a sign for me. Said He: Thy sign is that thou shouldst not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember thy Lord much and glorify (Him) in the evening and the morning.[2]

SECTION 5.—**Birth of Jesus**

41 And when the angels said: O Mary! God has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of the world.[3] 42 O Mary! be obedient to thy Lord and humble thyself and bow down with those who bow. 43 This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to thee and thou wast not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Mary in his charge, and thou wast not with them when they contended one with another.[4]
44 When the angels said: O Mary! God gives thee good news with a word from Him (of one)[5] whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and one of those who are near (to God):
45 And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of old age, and (he shall be) one of the good

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[1] The word of God which John verified was the promise given to Zacharias relating to the birth of a son. The use of the word *Kalimah*, as meaning a prophecy, is of frequent occurrence in the Holy Quran; see 6 : 34, 10 : 64, etc.

[2] The Quran here contradicts the Bible which makes Zacharias mute during the whole period, from the time of the announcement of the birth of a son to its actual delivery.

[3] The women of her own time are meant, as in v. 32, Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and the descendants of Amran are spoken of as being chosen similarly.

[4] The Holy Quran testifies to the chastity and excellence of Mary, while her contemporaries and her own people accused her of adultery (see 4 : 156). This is the announcement relating to the unseen revealed to the Holy Prophet. The casting of lots spoken of in the latter portion probably refers to Mary's marriage. The choice of a husband for her may have been made by drawing lots, for she was dedicated to the temple.

[5] Or, *gives thee good news of a word from Him*, in which case Jesus is called a word from God; but note that it is *a* word from God, and every creature of God is a word from Him. Compare 18 : 109. The word of God is the creative power.

ones.[1] 46 She said: My Lord! how shall there be a son (born) to me, and man has not touched me? He said: Even so, God creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, Be, and it is.[2] 47 And He will teach him the book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; 48 And (make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God's permission, and I heal the blind and the leprous and bring the dead to life with God's permission,[3] and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses;[4] surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers: 49 And a verifier of that which is before me of the Torah, and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden you,[5] and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, therefore be careful of (your duty to) God and obey me: 50 Surely God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. 51 But when Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers

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[1] Every child learns to speak when in the cradle if he is not dumb. The meaning seems to be that the son whom she shall bear shall not be marred by any defect and shall also attain to old age.

[2] The question and the answer are almost the same as in the case of Zacharias. That man had not touched her up to the time of this vision is true, but that her marriage had already been decided seems to be probable. At any rate there is not the least doubt that Mary was married to Joseph and that she had other children besides Jesus; see Matt. 12:46, 47, and 13:55.

[3] The reference is to the spiritually dead whom Jesus raised to life like any other prophet. Compare 8:24 which speaks of the Holy Prophet giving life to the dead; also 6:123. Matt. 11:5 which speaks of the blind receiving the sight, the lepers being cleansed and the dead being raised to life supports the same conclusion as that verse ends with the words, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" where the poor clearly stand for the poor in heart. The reference to the birds in the first part is likewise metaphorical, the bird standing for the man who soars high into the spiritual regions and is not bent low upon the earth. The prophet's power is thus displayed in three ways: (1) those who are found in the natural state of dust, and who, like dust, humbly submit themselves to the prophet's handling, are made to soar high into the spiritual regions; (2) those who are spiritually diseased are healed and made whole, i.e. able to work; and (3) those who are quite dead are spiritually quickened.

[4] The reference is to the special stress which Jesus laid on not caring for the morrow and laying up treasures in heaven.

[5] The Israelite prophets that came after Moses, while upholding the Mosaic law in the main, introduced minor changes to suit the needs of their own time. So did Jesus as the Gospels clearly show.

in God's way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in
the way) of God: We believe in God and bear witness
that we are submitting ones: 52 Our Lord! we believe
in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the apostle, so
write us down with those who bear witness. 53 And
they planned and God (also) planned, and God is the best
of planners.[1]

SECTION 6.—Jesus cleared of false charges

54 When God said, O Jesus! I will cause thee to die
and exalt thee in My presence and clear thee of those who
disbelieve and make those who follow thee above those
who disbelieve to the day of resurrection;[2] then to Me
shall be your return, so I will decide between you con-
cerning that in which you differed. 55 Then as to those
who disbelieve, I will chastise them with severe chastise-
ment in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have
no helpers. 56 And as to those who believe and do good
deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards; and God
does not love the unjust. 57 This do We recite to thee of
the communications and the wise reminder. 58 Surely
the likeness of Jesus is with God as the likeness of Adam;
He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he
was.[3] 59 (This is) the truth from thy Lord, so be not of

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[1] The reference here is to the Jewish plans to bring about the death of Jesus on the cross; so they charged him with sedition. But God frustrated their plans; see note on 7:157.

[2] As Rodwell observes, ***mutawaffika*** means *I will cause thee to die*. Bukhari gives the same meaning, and all Arabic lexicons are agreed that the word ***tawaffi***, in speaking of God, means the taking away of the soul or causing one to die; see also 39:42 where the Holy Quran itself states what *tawaffi* means. Similarly ***rafa'*** means the exalting of degrees. The promises in this verse are a reply to the Jewish plans in the last verse to bring about Jesus' death on the cross, which was according to Jewish notions an accursed death. Jesus was told that he would die a natural death and be exalted in Divine presence and be cleared of false charges, and lastly that his followers shall be made to dominate his deniers. See for further explanation note on 4:157.

[3] Adam may stand for man generally, because *all men are created from dust*, see 18:37, 22:5, etc. All that is meant, therefore, is that Jesus is no more than a mortal, and that it is an error to take him for a god as the Christians do.

If Adam be taken as a proper name, the meaning would still be only this, that just as Adam was created from dust and then chosen or purified by God, so was Jesus created from dust, and chosen to be a prophet. In either case there is no reference to Jesus being brought into existence without the agency of a male parent. The controversy is here carried on with the Christians, and it is their belief in the divinity of Jesus that is here condemned.

the disputers. 60 But whoever disputes with thee about this matter after what has come to thee of knowledge, say (to him): Come! let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our people and your people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and invoke God's curse on the liars.[1] 61 This is the true explanation, and there is none that may be worshipped but God; and surely God is the Mighty, the Wise. 62 But if they turn back, then God truly knows the mischief-makers.

SECTION 7.—Common Belief

63 Say: O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but God and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides God; but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.[2] 64 O followers of the Book! why do you dispute about Abraham, and the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed till after him; do you not then understand? 65 Behold! you are they who disputed about that of which you had knowledge;[3] why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge?[4] And God knows while you do not know. 66 Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was (an) upright

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[1] The reference here is to the Christian deputation from Najran that came in 10 A.H. and whose members were lodged in the mosque. The Holy Prophet advanced arguments showing that Jesus Christ was not God, but a man and a prophet. After having argued the question fully, and finding them still insisting on their belief in the divinity of Jesus, he invited them as a last resort to pray earnestly that the curse of God might overtake the party that insisted on falsehood. They wanted respite for a day to consider the matter, and the next day told him that they had decided not to pray against him as suggested. Thereupon they were given a pledge by which they were free to practise their religion: "Their authority and rights shall not be interfered with, nor anything that is customary amongst them, so long as they conducted themselves peaceably and uprightly."

[2] It was exactly in these words that the Prophet wrote a letter to Heracleus in the year 6 A.H. The verse lays down the basis of a settlement between contending religions, viz. the acceptance of a belief in Divine Unity which is common to the whole humanity, being accepted by an overwhelming majority, while the special divinities of the different nations have never found universal acceptance. Thus attention is called here to the study of comparative religion.

[3] I.e. about Moses and Jesus.

[4] I.e. the principles of the religion of Abraham. The name of Abraham is introduced here as the common link between the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims.

(man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists.
67 Surely the nearest of people to Abraham are those
who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe
(in him); and God is the guardian of the believers. 68 A
party of the followers of the Book desire that they should
lead you astray, and they lead not astray but themselves,
and they do not perceive. 69 O followers of the Book!
why do you disbelieve in the communications of God while
you witness (them)? 70 O followers of the Book! why
do you confound the truth with the falsehood and hide
the truth while you know?

SECTION 8.—**Machinations to discredit Islam**

71 And a party of the followers of the Book say: Avow
belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe,
in the first part of the day, and disbelieve at the end of
it, perhaps they may go back.[1] 72 And do not believe
but in him who follows your religion.[2] Say: (True)
guidance is the guidance of God—that one may be given
(by Him) the like of what you were given:[3] or they
would contend with you by an argument before your
Lord.[4] Say: Grace is in the hand of God, He gives it
to whom He pleases; and God is Ample-giving, Knowing.
73 He specially chooses for His mercy whom He pleases;
and God is the Lord of mighty grace. 74 And among
the followers of the Book there is he whom if thou entrust
with a heap of wealth he shall pay it back to thee, and
among them there is he whom if thou entrust with a *dinar*[5]
he shall not pay it back to thee except so long as thou
remain firm in demanding it; this is because they say:
There is not upon us any reproach in the matter of the

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[1] This was a plan to discredit Islam by resorting to apostasy. Such a plan could not have been thought of if apostates were put to death.

[2] I.e. they should believe only in a prophet who followed the Mosaic law.

[3] The reference is to Deut. 18:18, which gave promise of the appearance of a prophet "like unto" Moses. Such a prophet had not appeared among the Israelites, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the only prophet who laid a claim to being the like of Moses.

[4] I.e. the contention of the Muslims would prevail against the Jews and the Christians on the basis of Deut. 18:18. Compare 2:76: "Do you talk to them of what God has disclosed to you that they may contend with you by this before your Lord."

[5] *Dinar* is an Arab gold coin of the value of about 10s.

unlearned people ; [1] and they utter a lie against God
while they know. 75 Yea, whoever fulfils his promise and
guards (against evil)—then surely God loves the righteous.
76 Those who take a small price for the covenant of
God and their own oaths shall have no portion in the
hereafter, and God will not speak to them, nor will He
look upon them on the day of resurrection, nor will He
purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement.
77 And there is a party of them who lie about the Book,
that you may consider it to be (a part) of the Book while
it is not (a part) of the Book, and they say, It is from
God, while it is not from God ; and they tell a lie against
God whilst they know.[2] 78 It is not meet for a mortal
that God should give him the book and the judgment and
prophethood, then he should say to men, Be my servants
rather than God's ; but rather (he would say), Be worshippers
of the Lord because you teach the Book and you read (it) ? [3]
79 And neither would he enjoin you that you should take
the angels and the prophets for lords ; what ! would he
enjoin you with unbelief after you are Muslims ?

SECTION 9.—**Previous Prophets testify to Truth of Islam**

80 And when God made a covenant through the pro-
phets : Certainly what I have given you of book and
wisdom—then an apostle comes to you verifying that
which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must
aid him. He said : Do you affirm and accept My com-
pact in this (matter) ? They said : We do affirm. He
said : Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers
of witness with you.[4] 81 Whoever therefore turns back

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[1] They considered themselves free from all responsibility towards the unlearned Arabs, notwithstanding any engagement they might have made with them. Thus, according to the Holy Quran, an engagement or a duty is equally sacred whether one owes it to a Muslim or to a non-Muslim.

[2] This shows clearly that the Quran considered the Bible to have been already altered.

[3] This verse shows that, according to the Holy Quran, no prophet—Jesus included—ever taught his followers to take him for a god. Even the Gospels, with all the alterations they have undergone, do not teach the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

[4] The claim is advanced here that all the prophets had prophesied the advent of a World-Prophet who should verify the truth of all the prophets who had appeared in the world. Compare Acts 3 : 21, 22 : "Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of *all His holy prophets since the world began.*

after this, these it is that are the transgressors. 82 Is
it then other than God's religion that they seek (to follow),
and to Him submits whoever is in the heavens and the
earth, willingly or unwillingly,[1] and to Him shall they be
returned. 83 Say: We believe in God and what has
been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham
and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what
was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from
their Lord; we do not make any distinction between
any of them, and to Him do we submit. 84 And whoever
desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted
from him,[2] and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.
85 How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their
believing and (after) they had borne witness that the
Apostle was true and clear arguments had come to them;[3]
and God does not guide the unjust people. 86 (As for)
these, their reward is that on them is the curse of God
and the angels and of men, all together, 87 Abiding in
it; their chastisement shall not be lightened nor shall
they be respited; 88 Except those who repent after
that and amend, for truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.
89 Those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase
in disbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted, and
these are they that go astray. 90 Those who disbelieve
and die while they are disbelievers, the earth full of gold
shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should
offer to ransom himself with it; these it is who shall have
a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers.

PART IV

SECTION 10.—Kaba, the Centre of Islam

91 By no means shall you attain to righteousness until
you spend out of what you love; and whatever thing you

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." The Holy Prophet Muhammad stands unique among the prophets of the world in these two respects, viz. his advent was foretold by all others and he confirmed their truth by requiring his followers to believe in all the prophets that had gone before him.

[1] Unwilling submission is submission to the consequences of evil deeds which no one can avoid.

[2] As nothing but submission to Divine laws is acceptable to God.

[3] The reference is to those who believed in the former prophets.

spend, God surely knows it. 92 All food was lawful to
the children of Israel except that which Israel had for-
bidden to himself before the Torah was revealed.[1] Say:
Bring the Torah and read it, if you are truthful. 93 And
whoever fabricates a lie against God after this, these it
is that are unjust. 94 Say: God has spoken the truth,
therefore follow the religion of Abraham, the upright
one; and he was not one of the polytheists. 95 Surely
the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka,
blessed and a guidance for the nations.[2] 96 In it are
clear signs: the standing-place of Abraham, and whoever
enters it shall be secure, and pilgrimage to the House is
incumbent upon men for the sake of God, (upon) every
one who is able to undertake the journey to it;[3] and
whoever disbelieves, then surely God is Self-sufficient,
above any need of the worlds. 97 Say: O followers of
the Book! why do you disbelieve in the communications
of God, and God is a witness of what you do. 98 Say:
O followers of the Book! why do you hinder him who
believes from the way of God? You seek (to make)
it crooked, while you are witnesses, and God is not heedless
of what you do. 99 O you who believe! if you obey
a party from among those who have been given the Book,
they will turn you back as unbelievers after your belief.
100 But how can you disbelieve while it is you to whom
the communications of God are recited, and among you is
His Apostle? And whoever holds fast to God, he indeed
is guided to the right path.

SECTION 11.—**The Way to Success**

101 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to)

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[1] The Jews objected to the Muslims making use of certain foods which the law of Moses did not allow. An answer is given here that such foods were lawful for Abraham and his descendants, and Islam agreed in principle with the religion of Abraham. By *all food* is thus meant *all food which is lawful for the Muslims*.

[2] Bekka is another name for Mecca. It is claimed here that the *Ka'ba* was the first house of Divine worship on earth. Hence it was made the *Qibla* of the World Prophet who was the last of the prophets.

[3] The three signs are really as many prophecies. The standing-place of Abraham had already been declared to be the Muslim centre from which the doctrine of Divine Unity would be proclaimed to the whole world. The second sign is its security, which indicates that it shall be secure from the designs of its enemies. The third prophecy is that it shall for ever remain a place of pilgrimage.

God with the care which is due to Him, and do not die
unless you are Muslims. 102 And hold fast by the covenant
of God all together and be not disunited, and remember
the favour of God on you when you were enemies, then
He united your hearts, so by His favour you became
brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, but
He saved you from it; thus does God make clear to you
His communications that you may follow the right way.
103 And from among you there should be a party who
invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the
wrong, and these it is that shall be successful. 104 And
be not like those who became divided and disagreed after
clear arguments had come to them, and these it is that
shall have a grievous chastisement, 105 On the day
when (some) faces shall turn white and (some) faces shall
turn black; then as to those whose faces turn black:
Did you disbelieve after your believing? Taste there-
fore the chastisement because you disbelieved. 106 And
as to those whose faces turn white, they shall be in God's
mercy; in it they shall abide. 107 These are the com-
munications of God which We recite to thee with truth,
and God does not desire any injustice to the creatures.
108 And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in
the earth is God's; and to God are all affairs returned.

SECTION 12.—Relations with Jews

109 You are the best of the nations raised up for (the
benefit of) men: you enjoin what is right and forbid the
wrong and believe in God; and if the followers of the
Book had believed, it would have been better for them;
of them (some) are believers and most of them are trans-
gressors. 110 They shall by no means harm you but
with a trifling harm; and if they fight with you they shall
turn (their) backs to you, then shall they not be helped.[1]
111 Abasement is made to cleave to them wherever they
are found, except under a covenant with God and a covenant

[1] The Jews in Arabia sided with the enemies of Islam in their endeavour to extirpate the new religion, and this notwithstanding their agreement with the Muslims, but they were not successful in inflicting any serious harm upon the Muslims, and whenever they openly faced the Muslims they fled. The polytheists, who gave them secret promises of help, never came to their aid when they were in distress.

with men,[1] and they have become deserving of wrath from
God, and humiliation is made to cleave to them; this is
because they disbelieved in the communications of God
and slew the prophets unjustly; this is because they dis-
obeyed and exceeded the limits. 112 They are not all
alike; of the followers of the Book there is an upright
party: they recite God's communications in the night-
time and they adore (Him): 113 They believe in God
and the last day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid
the wrong, and they strive with one another in hastening
to good deeds, and these are among the good. 114 And
whatever good they do, they shall not be denied it,
and God knows the righteous. 115 Those who disbelieve,
neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them
in the least against God; and these are the inmates of
the fire; therein they shall abide. 116 The likeness of
what they spend in the life of this world is as the likeness
of wind in which is intense cold (that) smites the seed-
produce of a people who have done injustice to their
souls and destroys it; and God is not unjust to them, but
they are unjust to themselves. 117 O you who believe!
do not take for intimate friends from among others than
your own people: they do not fall short of inflicting
loss upon you; they love what distresses you; vehement
hatred has already appeared from out of their mouths,
and what their breasts conceal is greater still; indeed,
We have made the communications clear to you, if you
will understand. 118 Lo! you are they who will love
them while they do not love you, and you believe in the
book in its entirety;[2] and when they meet you they say,
We believe; and when they are alone, they bite the ends
of their fingers in rage against you. Say: Die in your
rage; God knows what is in the breasts. 119 If good
befalls you, it grieves them, and if an evil afflicts you,
they rejoice at it; and if you are patient and guard your-
selves, their struggle will not injure you in any way;
surely God comprehends what they do.

[1] Almost the same words (excluding the exception) occur in 2:61. The Jews had already been subjected to the greatest humiliation and disgrace before the appearance of the Holy Prophet. But with the advent of Islam they could better their condition either by accepting the covenant of God, by which is meant the acceptance of Islam, or by making a compact of security with such men as could give them protection.

[2] The "book" here stands for Divine revelation in general.

SECTION 13.—The Battle of Uhud

120 And when thou didst go forth early in the morning from thy family, to lodge the believers in encampments for war,[1]—and God is Hearing, Knowing. 121 When two parties from among you had determined that they should show cowardice,[2] and God was the guardian of them both, and in God shall the believers trust. 122 And God did certainly assist you at Badr when you were weak; be careful of (your duty to) God then, that you may give thanks. 123 When thou didst say to the believers: Does it not suffice you that your Lord should assist you with three thousand of the angels sent down? [3] 124 Yea! if you remain patient and are on your guard, and they come upon you in a headlong manner, your Lord will assist you with five thousand of havoc-making angels.[4] 125 And God did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby, and victory is only from God, the Mighty, the Wise, 126 That He may cut off a portion from among those who disbelieve, or abase them so that they should return failing to attain what they desired.[5] 127 Thou hast no concern in the affair whether He turns to them (mercifully) or chastises them, for surely they are unjust. 128 And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is God's; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases; and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

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[1] It is to the events of the battle of Uhud that this and the following sections are devoted. In the third year of the Hejira, Abu Sufyan marched against Medina at the head of an army of three thousand and encamped at Uhud, a mountain about four miles from Medina. The Muslim force was only about seven hundred strong. The enemy were first completely routed, but fifty Muslim archers, who were placed in a strong position to cut off the retreat of the enemy, made a mistake, and in order to join in the pursuit left their position. The enemy fell back upon the Muslims, who were now in disorder and had lost their naturally fortified position, and after inflicting some loss upon them, left the field secure from the pursuit of the Muslim force.

[2] The two tribes of *Banu Salma* and *Banu Hárisa* are meant.

[3] The angels were sent to strengthen the hearts of the Muslims and to cast terror into the hearts of the enemy; see v. 125 and 8 : 10.

[4] The assistance of the angels stated in this verse refers to a third occasion, when the enemy came "in a headlong manner," all the tribes uniting with the Quraish to crush the Muslims. This happened in the battle of Ahzab two years later.

[5] So the Quraish were not victorious in the battle of Uhud.

SECTION 14.—**How Triumph can be attained**

129 O you who believe! do not devour usury, doubling
(and) redoubling, and be careful of (your duty to) God,
that you may be successful. 130 And guard yourselves
against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers.
131 And obey God and the Apostle, that you may be
shown mercy. 132 And hasten to forgiveness from your
Lord and a garden, the extensiveness of which is (as) the
heavens and the earth; it is prepared for the righteous:
133 Those who spend in ease as well as in straitness, and
those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and
God loves the doers of good (to others). 134 And those
who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to
their souls, remember God and ask forgiveness for their
faults—and who forgives the faults but God?—and (who)
do not persist in what they have done while they know.
135 (As for) these—their reward is forgiveness from
their Lord, and gardens in which rivers flow, to abide
in them, and excellent is the reward of the labourers.
136 Indeed there have been examples before you; there-
fore travel in the earth and see what was the end of the
rejecters. 137 This is a clear statement for men, and
a guidance and an admonition to the righteous. 138 And
be not infirm, nor do grieve, and you shall have the upper
hand if you are believers. 139 If a wound has afflicted
you, a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving)
people; and We bring these days to men by turns, and
that God may know those who believe and take witnesses
from among you; and God does not love the unjust,
140 And that He may purge those who believe and destroy
the unbelievers. 141 Do you think that you will enter the
garden while God has not yet known those who strive
hard from among you, and (He has not) known the
patient? [1] 142 And certainly you desired death before
you met it; so indeed you have seen it and you look
(at it).

[1] I.e. He has not yet marked them out by giving them a chance to show their steadfastness under the hardest trials. See the concluding words of v. 153 where it is stated that God knows what is in the hearts, but that the object is to purge the hearts.

SECTION 15.—Perseverance in Reverses

143 And Muhammad is no more than an apostle:
the apostles have already passed away before him; if
then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your
heels? [1] And whoever turns back upon his heels, he
cannot harm God in the least; and God will reward the
grateful. 144 And a soul can not die but with the per-
mission of God; the term is fixed; and whoever desires
the reward of this world, We will give him of it, and whoever
desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him of
it; and We will reward the grateful. 145 And how many
a prophet has fought with whom were many worshippers
of the Lord; so they did not become weak-hearted on
account of what befell them in God's way, nor did they
weaken, nor did they abase themselves; and God loves the
patient. 146 And their saying was no other than that they
said: Our Lord! forgive us our faults and our excess in our
affair, and make firm our feet and help us against the un-
believing people. 147 So God gave them the reward of
this world and better reward of the hereafter; and God
loves those who do good (to others).

SECTION 16.—The Uhud Misfortune

148 O you who believe! if you obey those who disbelieve,
they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will
turn back losers. 149 Nay! God is your patron and He
is the best of the helpers. 150 We will cast terror into
the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up
with God that for which He has sent down no authority,
and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the
unjust. 151 And certainly God made good to you His
promise, when you slew them by His permission, until
when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the
affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which

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[1] The Holy Prophet received severe wounds in the battle of Uhud, insomuch that it was thought that he was killed. It is to this that the verse refers. Again, after the Prophet's death, it was by reciting this verse that Abu Bakr silenced those who alleged that the Holy Prophet was living and could not die. The argument was that as all the prophets before him had died, he ought also to have died. This argument deals a death-blow to the belief that Jesus Christ was still alive.

you loved; of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the hereafter;[1] then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and God is Gracious to the believers.
152 When you ran off precipitately, and did not wait for any one, and the Apostle was calling you from your rear, so He gave you another sorrow instead of (your) sorrow, that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor (at) what befell you,[2] and God is aware of what you do.
153 Then after sorrow He sent down security upon you, a calm coming upon a party of you, and (there was) another party whom their own souls had rendered anxious; they entertained about God thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly,[3] saying: We have no hand in the affair. Say: The affair is wholly (in the hands) of God. They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to thee. They say: Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here. Say: Had you remained in your houses, those for whom slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they would be slain,[4] and that God might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and God knows what is in the breasts.
154 Those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met,[5] only the devil sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had

[1] See note on v. 120. These were the two parties of the archers, those who obeyed the orders and remained firm in the position and those who left their position for the sake of booty. The latter are condemned here as desiring this world. The desire for booty is thus denounced plainly, and no Muslim could ever fight for plunder.

[2] It refers to the Prophet's call, at whom, the Muslims now saw, the attack of the enemy was directed. So they did not grieve for losing an opportunity of pursuing the enemy, but for the dangerous position in which they saw the Prophet.

[3] These were the hypocrites who, led by Abdulla bin Ubayy, had deserted the Muslim force and gone back to Medina. Their statement "we would not have been slain here" refers to the slaughter of their kinsmen who fought and some of whom were killed.

[4] The hypocrites contended that, if they had remained in the city, the Uhud misfortune would have been averted. They are told that even if the battle had taken place in the city, the faithful would have laid down their lives for the good cause, and would not have remained in their houses like the hypocrites.

[5] There were some men who fled from the field of battle when the enemy fell back upon the Muslims. It was a wrong course as they should have tried to rejoin the main force.

done, and certainly God has pardoned them, for God is Forgiving, Forbearing.

SECTION 17.—**The Faithful distinguished**

155 O you who believe! be not like those who disbelieve
and say of their brethren when they travel in the earth or
engage in fighting: Had they been with us, they would
not have died and they would not have been slain.[1] God
makes this to be an intense regret in their hearts; and
God gives life and causes death; and God sees what you
do. 156 And if you are slain in the way of God or you
die, forgiveness from God and mercy is certainly better
than what they amass. 157 And if indeed you die or you
are slain, to God shall you be gathered together. 158 So
it is due to mercy from God that thou dealest with them
gently, and hadst thou been rough, hard-hearted, they
would have dispersed from around thee;[2] pardon them
therefore and ask protection for them, and take counsel
with them in the affair; and when thou hast (thus) deter-
mined,[3] place thy trust in God;[4] for God loves those
who trust (in Him). 159 If God assists you, then there
is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you,

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[1] By "their brethren" are meant their relatives who were true Muslims. The principle laid down is that one must have the courage to face death when doing his duty. The next verse makes it plain: "If you are slain in the way of God or you die," i.e. if you are slain or you die when doing your duty, you achieve a greater object than if you shirk your duty and amass wealth.

[2] How lenient the Holy Prophet was in his daily dealings with men may be gauged from the unexampled leniency which he showed in the great struggle which he had to carry on in the face of such odds. There are the three hundred men who deserted him at a most critical moment; there are also the archers who disobeyed his strict orders not to leave their position and thus brought a disaster on the Muslim army. Yet they are not court-martialled, nor punished, nor even rebuked. On the other hand, the words that follow show that they were not only pardoned but even retained their position in the counsels of the Muslim State.

[3] On the occasion of the Uhud battle, the majority decided for meeting the enemy in the open. A misfortune was the result, yet the principle of taking counsel was again insisted upon on this very occasion, and the Prophet was told to determine every affair after taking counsel.

[4] It should be noted that trusting in God, in the language of the Quran, does not imply inaction. Everything necessary is to be done, a course of action must be determined in the proper manner, and then in pursuing that course trust must be placed in God, which clearly implies that a man should do his utmost and then leave the consequences in God's hand; that is, he must be resigned to what follows, taking the consequences with a cool mind.

who is there that can assist you after Him? And on
God should the believers rely.
160 And it is not attributable to a prophet that he should act unfaithfully;[1]
and he who acts unfaithfully shall bring that in respect
of which he has acted unfaithfully on the day of resurrection; then shall every soul be paid back fully what it
has earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.
161 Is he who follows God's pleasure like him who has
made himself deserving of displeasure from God, and his
abode is hell; and it is an evil destination.
162 There are (varying) grades with God, and God sees what they
do.
163 Certainly God conferred a benefit upon the
believers when He raised among them an Apostle from
among themselves, reciting to them His communications
and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and
the wisdom, although before that they were in manifest
error.
164 What! when a misfortune has befallen you,
and you have afflicted (the unbelievers) with twice as
much,[2] you say: Whence is this? Say: It is from
yourselves; for God has power over all things.
165 And what befell you on the day when the two armies met was
with God's knowledge, and that He might know the
believers,
166 And that He might know the hypocrites;
and it was said to them: Come, fight in God's way, or defend
yourselves. They said: If we knew (it was) fighting we
would certainly have followed you.[3] They were on that
day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say
with their mouths what is not in their hearts; and God
best knows what they conceal.
167 Those who said
of their brethren whilst they (themselves) held back:
Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed.
Say: Avert death from yourselves if you speak the truth.
168 And reckon not those who are killed in God's way
as dead; nay, they are alive (and) are provided sustenance

[1] These words establish the doctrine of the sinlessness of prophets. The prophet comes to purify others, as we are told in v. 163, and he could not effect this object if he was not himself pure.

[2] The unbelievers had already suffered twice at the hands of the Muslims, once in the field of Badr and again in the early stages of the battle of Uhud.

[3] Their meaning was that the Muslims were going to sure destruction with such a disparity of numbers, so that it was not a fight. But the fact was that they were at heart the enemies of Islam and sided with the enemy.

from their Lord; 169 Rejoicing in what God has given
them out of His grace, and they rejoice for the sake of
those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined
them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.
170 They rejoice on account of favour from God and (His)
grace, and that God will not waste the reward of the
believers.

SECTION 18.—No Gain to the Enemy

171 Those who responded to the call of God and the
Apostle after the misfortune had befallen them—those
among them who do good and guard (against evil) shall
have a great reward;[1] 172 Those to whom the people
said: Men have gathered against you, therefore fear
them; but this increased their faith, and they said:
God is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Pro-
tector.[2] 173 So they returned with favour from God
and (His) grace; no evil touched them and they followed
God's pleasure; and God is the Lord of mighty grace.
174 It is only the devil that causes you to fear from his
friends, but do not fear them, and fear Me if you are
believers. 175 And let not those grieve thee who fall
into unbelief hastily; they cannot injure God in the
least; God intends that He should not give them any
portion in the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous
chastisement. 176 Those who have bought unbelief at
the price of faith shall do no harm at all to God, and
they shall have a painful chastisement. 177 And let
not those who disbelieve think that Our granting them
respite is good for them; We grant them respite only
that they may add to (their) sins; and they shall have a
disgraceful chastisement. 178 On no account will God
leave the believers in the condition which you are in until
He separates the evil from the good; nor is God going to
make you acquainted with the unseen, but God chooses

[1] The Meccan army was pursued the next day to a place known as *Hamra-ul-asad*, under which name the expedition is known; but they dared not encounter the Muslims, notwithstanding their superior numbers.

[2] This verse and the two that follow refer to the expedition known as *Badr-us-Sughra* (the smaller Badr) undertaken next year because Abu Sufyan, commander of the Meccan army, announced, when leaving the field of Uhud, that he would meet the Muslims the following year at Badr, but notwithstanding its threats the Meccan army never marched forth.

of His apostles whom He pleases;[1] therefore believe in
God and His apostles; and if you believe and guard
(against evil), you shall have a great reward. 179 And
let not those who are niggardly in giving away that which
God has granted them out of His grace think that it is
good for them; nay, it is worse for them; they shall have
that whereof they were niggardly made to cleave to their
necks on the resurrection day;[2] and God's is the heritage
of the heavens and the earth; and God is aware of what
you do.

SECTION 19.—Carpings of the Enemy

180 God has heard the saying of those who say: God
is poor and we are rich.[3] We will record what they say,
and their killing the prophets unjustly, and We will say:
Taste the chastisement of burning. 181 This is for what
your own hands have sent before and because God is
not in the least unjust to the servants. 182 Who said:
God has enjoined us that we should not believe in any
apostle until he brings us an offering which the fire con-
sumes.[4] Say: Indeed, there came to you apostles before
me with clear arguments and with that which you demand;
why then did you kill them if you are truthful? 183 But
if they reject thee, so indeed were rejected before thee
apostles who came with clear arguments and scriptures and
the illuminating book. 184 Every soul shall taste of
death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on
the resurrection day; then whoever is removed far away
from the fire and is made to enter the garden, he indeed
has attained the object; and the life of this world is

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[1] The "unseen" means the ways of Divine pleasure. These are not disclosed to every person directly, but apostles are chosen for the purpose.

[2] The same idea, though in more general terms, as to the effect of deeds being bound to the neck, is expressed in 17:13: "And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck; and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open." Thus every man carries the effect of his deeds with him in this life, but on the day of resurrection that effect will become clearly visible. Thus is the effect of niggardliness made to cling to the necks of the niggardly.

[3] The Jews ridiculed the poverty of the Muslims and their borrowings from the Jewish money-lenders. They also ridiculed the raising of funds for the defence of the faith by subscriptions.

[4] The reference is to the burnt-offerings of the Mosaic law, for which see Lev. 1:9. The demand for the burnt-offering was really a demand that the Israelite law should be followed.

nothing but a provision of vanities. 185 You shall certainly be tried respecting your possessions and yourselves, and you shall hear much annoying talk from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists;[1] and if you are patient and guard (against evil), this surely is one of the affairs (which should be) determined upon. 186 And when God made a covenant with those who were given the Book: You shall make it known to men and you shall not hide it; but they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it; so evil is that which they buy. 187 Do not think that those who rejoice for what they have done and love that they should be praised for what they have not done—do by no means think that they shall escape the chastisement; and a painful chastisement is (in store) for them. 188 And God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and God has power over all things.

SECTION 20.—**Triumph of the Faithful**

189 In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are surely signs for men of understanding: 190 Those who remember God standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth:[2] Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us from the chastisement of the fire: 191 Our Lord! whomsoever Thou makest enter the fire, him Thou hast indeed brought to disgrace, and there shall be no helpers for the unjust: 192 Our Lord! we heard a Preacher calling to the faith, saying: Believe in your Lord; so we did believe; our Lord! forgive us our faults, and cover our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous: 193 Our Lord! and grant us what Thou

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[1] This was never so true as at the present time. During the past century Muslims have constantly been turned out of their homes, and Muslim states have been swept out of existence and hundreds of thousands of Muslims have been killed. And the abusive language of the Christian, political as well as missionary Press, and of their imitators in the Hindoo (Arya Samajist) Press, has outstepped all limits.

[2] The Muslims are told to remember God and at the same time to reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, i.e. to carry on scientific research. Hence in the early history of Islam we find religion and science going hand in hand as against Christianity, which reduced religion to monkery by excluding science.

hast promised us by Thy apostles and disgrace us not
on the day of resurrection; surely Thou dost not fail to
perform the promise. 194 So their Lord accepted their
prayer, saying: I will not waste the work of a worker
among you, whether male or female, the one of you being
from the other; they, therefore, who fled and were turned
out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who
fought and were slain, I will certainly cover their evil
deeds, and I will make them enter gardens in which
rivers flow: a reward from God, and with God is yet
better reward. 195 Let it not deceive thee that those
who disbelieve act in the cities as they please. 196 A
brief enjoyment! then their abode is hell; and evil is
the resting-place. 197 But as to those who are careful
of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have gardens in
which rivers flow, abiding in them; an entertainment
from their Lord, and that which is with God is better
for the righteous. 198 And of the followers of the Book
there are surely those who believe in God and (in) that
which has been revealed to you and (in) that which has
been revealed to them, being lowly before God; they
do not take a small price for the communications of God;
these it is that have their reward with their Lord: surely
God is quick in reckoning. 199 O you who believe!
be patient and vie in endurance and remain steadfast,
and be careful of (your duty to) God that you may be
successful.

CHAPTER 4

AN-NISÂ: THE WOMEN

(*Medina*—24 *Sections*, 177 *Verses*)

THIS chapter is named *the Women* because it deals chiefly with the rights of women. It deals with the circumstances arising out of the battle of Uhad, and this fact must be borne in mind in considering the question of the continuity and uniformity of its subject-matter. The chief features of the battle of Uhud were the large number of the Muslims killed and the desertion of the hypocrites; while following it were circumstances which brought about a final rupture with the Jews. The first of these circumstances necessitated a discussion of the rights of orphans and women, and the first six sections are accordingly taken up with that subject. The opening section lays down injunctions relating to the duties of guardians towards their orphan wards. The second section brings

oman to a status of equality with man, and lays down a new law of inheritance; for among the Arabs a woman had no right to inherit the property of a deceased relative. The third section deals with the treatment of women in general and denounces the practice of claiming women as a part of inheritance. The fourth section states what women may not be taken in marriage, and the fifth gives them the right of disposing of their earnings as they please; while the sixth first points out the remedy when there is a disagreement between the husband and the wife and then inculcates the principle of charity in general, introducing the subject of hypocrisy towards its close.

After having shown, in the seventh and the eighth sections, how the Jews had become morally degraded, and how, for no other reason than envy of the Muslims, they had sided with the polytheists in seeking to destroy the Muslims, and after having enjoined upon the Muslims to be strictly firm in justice and to obey the Prophet, we are led on in the ninth section to the dealings of the hypocrites who had refused to accept the Prophet's judgment in going out to meet the enemy, and then told in the tenth that the question of war was a question of life and death for the Muslims. The eleventh section deals with the attitude of the hypocrites, and the twelfth shows how waverers are to be dealt with. The thirteenth states when, and to what extent, a murderer of a Muslim is excusable, because it was very often by treachery or hypocrisy that the Muslims were killed; while the fourteenth shows that those Muslims who were compelled to remain with the enemy against their own wishes were excusable. The fifteenth warns the Muslims against being surprised in battle when saying their prayers. The sixteenth and the seventeenth refer to the secret counsels of the hypocrites. The eighteenth condemns idolatry, because it is the idolatrous hypocrites that are spoken of throughout the previous sections, and the subject is thus brought to a close.

Previous to the introduction of the third chief subject of this chapter there is a reversion in the nineteenth section to equitable dealings with orphans and women, and the subject is generalized in the twentieth; while in the same section the hypocrites from among the Jews are dealt with. The next predicts their end, at the same time showing that belief in previous prophets could do them no good if they rejected the Holy Prophet. The twenty-second speaks of their transgressions and of their false allegations regarding the death of Jesus on the cross. The twenty-third section tells them that the whole of the previous prophecy pointed to the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, while the last one, after referring briefly to the Christian error in deifying Jesus, closes with a reversion to the subject of inheritance, hinting at the passing of the inheritance of prophethood from the house of Israel to the house of Ishmael.

As this chapter treats of many of the questions arising out of the battle of Uhud, there seems to be little doubt that it was revealed soon after that battle. And thus, as in arrangement, so in the order of revelation it follows the last chapter. The main portion of it thus belongs to the fourth year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Orphan Wards and their Guardians

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, who
created you from a single being and created its mate of
the same (kind)[1] and spread from these two many men
and women; and be careful of (your duty to) God, by
whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to)
the ties of relationship; surely God watches over you.
2 And give to the orphans their property, and do not
substitute worthless (things) for (their) good (ones), and
do not devour their property (as an addition) to your own
property; this is surely a great crime. 3 And if you
fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, marry
such women as seem good to you, two and three and four;[2]
but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them),
then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess;[3]
this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the
right course. 4 And give women their dowries as a
free gift, but if they of themselves be pleased to give up
to you a portion of them, then eat it with enjoyment and
with wholesome result. 5 And do not give away your
property which God has made for you a (means of) support
to the weak of understanding, and maintain them out of
(the profits of) it, and clothe them and speak to them
words of honest advice. 6 And test the orphans until

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[1] See 16:72 where wives are spoken of as being created for men *min anfusikum*, i.e. from themselves. The word *nafs* in both these places means *essence* or *kind*. The theory of the woman being created from the *rib* of man finds no place in the Holy Quran.

[2] This passage *permits polygamy under certain circumstances: it does not enjoin it nor even permit it unconditionally*. The circumstances under which this chapter was revealed afford an explanation of the words. The war was working havoc in the male population. Thus many orphans were left in the charge of widows, who found it difficult to procure the necessary means of support. Hence the Muslims were told that if they could not do justice to the orphans, they might marry the widows, whose children would thus become their own children; and as the number of women was now much greater than the number of men, they were permitted to marry even two or three or four women. It would thus be clear that the permission to have more than one wife was given under peculiar circumstances; and the Prophet's action in marrying widows, as well as the example of many of his companions, corroborates this statement. A reference to v. 127 makes this significance still more clear.

[3] For conditions under which women taken prisoners in war—what your right hands possess—could be taken in marriage, see v. 25

they attain puberty ; then if you find in them maturity
of intellect, make over to them their property, and do not
consume it extravagantly and hastily, anticipating their
attaining to full age ; and whoever is rich, let him abstain
(from using it for himself), and whoever is poor, let him
eat reasonably. And when you make over to them their
property, call witnesses in their presence ; and God is
enough as a Reckoner. 7 Men shall have a portion of
what the parents and the near relatives leave, and women
shall have a portion of what the parents and the near
relatives leave, whether there is little or much of it : a
stated portion.[1] 8 And when (distant) relatives are
present at the division and the orphans and the needy,
give them (something) out of it and speak to them kind
words. 9 And let those be afraid (of being unjust to
orphans) who, should they leave behind them weakly
offspring, would fear on their account ; so let them be
careful of (their duty to) God, and let them speak right
words. 10 Those who swallow the property of the orphans
unjustly swallow only fire into their bellies and they shall
enter burning fire.

SECTION 2.—Law of Inheritance

11 God enjoins you concerning your children : the
male shall have the equal of the portion of two females ;
but if there are more than two females, they shall have
two-thirds of what (the deceased) has left, and if there
is one, she shall have the half ; and as for his parents,
each of them shall have the sixth of what he has left if
he has a child ; but if he has no child and (only) his two
parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the third ;
but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the
sixth after (the payment of) a bequest he may have
bequeathed or a debt ; your parents and your children,
you know not which of them is the nearer to you in use-

[1] Among the Arabs women and children had no share in an inheritance, for they used to say : " None shall inherit but he who smites with the spear." The principle laid down in this verse is the basis of the Muslim law of inheritance. Children and near relatives, or failing these, distant relatives, whether males or females, are the lawful heirs. Whatever objection there may be to this principle on the ground of division of property into parcels, there is not the least doubt that the rule is in accordance with the broad democratic principle which Islam seeks to establish.

fulness; this is an ordinance from God: surely God is Knowing, Wise. 12 And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave after (payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt; and they shall have the fourth of what you leave if you have no child, but if you have a child then they shall have the eighth of what you leave after (payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt; and if a man or a woman having no children leaves inheritance and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of them two shall have the sixth, but if they are more than that, they shall be sharers in the third after (payment of) any bequest that may have been bequeathed or a debt that does not harm (others);[1] this is an ordinance from God, and God is Knowing, Forbearing. 13 These are God's limits; and whoever obeys God and His Apostle, He will cause him to enter gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the great achievement. 14 And whoever disobeys God and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.

SECTION 3.—Treatment of Women

15 And as for those who are guilty of an indecency from among your women, call to witness against them four (witnesses) from among you; then if they bear witness, confine them to the houses until death takes them away or God opens some way for them.[2] 16 And as for the two who are guilty of it from among you, give them

[1] The law of inheritance, as laid down in the Holy Quran, is very simple, though the way in which it is worked out makes it very complicated. Take away debts, then give effect to bequest, if there is any. Then give the wife or the husband her or his portion. Out of the remainder give the father or the mother his or her portion, and make over the residue to the children, a son taking twice as much as a daughter. In case the deceased has no children, the parents' share is increased and a portion is given to brothers and sisters; while the case in which the deceased has neither parents nor children is dealt with in the last verse of the chapter, the brothers and the sisters taking the whole.

[2] The indecency spoken of here is immoral conduct short of fornication. For punishment in case of fornication, see 24 : 2. The punishment spoken of here is simply to curtail their liberty, so that they should not be free to leave their houses. It should be noted that if Muslim women were not free to go out from their houses, such a punishment would have been meaningless.

both a slight punishment ; then if they repent and amend,
turn aside from them ; surely God is Oft-returning (to
mercy), the Merciful.[1] 17 Repentance with God is only
for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (back) soon,
so these it is to whom God turns (mercifully), and God
is ever Knowing, Wise. 18 And repentance is not for
those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes
to one of them, he says, Now I repent ; nor (for) those
who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for
whom We have prepared a painful chastisement. 19 O
you who believe ! it is not lawful for you that you should
take women as heritage against (their) will ;[2] and do
not straiten them in order that you may take part of
what you have given them, unless they are guilty of
manifest indecency, and treat them kindly ; and if you
dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing while
God has placed abundant good in it. 20 And if you wish
to have one wife in the place of another[3] and you have
given one of them a heap of gold, take not from it any
thing ; would you take it by slandering (her) and (doing
her) manifest wrong ? 21 And how can you take it
when one of you has already gone in to the other and
they have made with you a firm covenant ? 22 And
marry not women whom your fathers married, except
what has already passed ; this surely is indecent and
hateful, and it is an evil way.[4]

SECTION 4.—**Forbidden Marriages**

23 Forbidden to you are your mothers and your
daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and

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[1] The crime spoken of in this verse is the same as that in the previous verse. The committers are two, and they may be either both males or a male and a female.

[2] Among the pre-Islamite Arabs, when a man died, his elder son or other relations had a right to possess his widow or widows, marrying them themselves if they pleased without settling a dowry upon them, or marrying them to others, or prohibiting them from marriage altogether.

[3] *Having one wife in the place of another* simply signifies *the divorcing of the first wife and marrying another.* This peculiar form is adopted to show that the normal condition for an adult is to remain in a married state, so that if he divorces a wife he would take another in marriage. The subject is really one of divorce as the words that follow show.

[4] Before Islam, when a man died his widows were the property of the eldest son, and he could marry any of them that he liked. This immoral practice was abolished.

your maternal aunts and brothers' daughters and sisters' daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your stepdaughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in—but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you (in marrying them)—and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins, and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; for God is Forgiving, Merciful:

PART V

24 And all married women except those whom your
right hands possess:[1] (this is) God's ordinance to you;
and lawful for you are (all women) besides this, provided
that you seek (them) with your property, taking (them) in
marriage,[2] not committing fornication. Then as to those
whom you profit by (by marrying), give them their dowries
as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what
you mutually agree after what is appointed (of dowry);
surely God is Knowing, Wise. 25 And whoever among
you has not within his power ampleness of means to
marry free believing women, (he may marry) of those
whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and God knows best your faith; you are
(sprung) the one from the other; so marry them with
the permission of their masters, and give them their
dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor

[1] The phrase *má malakat aimán-u-kum* is taken generally as signifying *prisoners of war*, because they are taken by *superior power*. But it may also mean *those whom you have lawfully taken in marriage*, because lawful possession is clearly implied in the word *aimán*, which signifies *covenant*, marriage also being a covenant. The meaning of the passage, therefore, is that *all married women are prohibited to you except those whom you have already married*, and thus while marriage contracts already entered into were recognized, a marriage with a married woman was prohibited for the future. Note that *muhsanat* may also mean *free woman*. If the ordinary meaning of *má malakat aimán-u-kum* as *those taken prisoners in war* is accepted, the meaning would be that a woman taken prisoner in war, even if not formally divorced by her former husband, could be taken in marriage, if she became a convert to Islam, which condition is expressly mentioned in the verse that follows. It may further be noted that such prisoners of war were ordinarily set free under express Quranic injunction (see 47 : 4) and there are rare examples in which they were retained.

[2] This shows that a man must be able to earn before he contracts a marriage relation.

receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of fornication, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.[1]

SECTION 5.—Women's Property Rights

26 God desires to explain to you, and to guide you into the ways of those before you, and to turn to you (merci-
fully), and God is Knowing, Wise. 27 And God desires
that He should turn to you (mercifully), and those who follow (their) lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation. 28 God desires that He should make
light your burdens, and man is created weak.[2] 29 O
you who believe! do not devour your property among yourselves falsely, except that it be trading by your mutual consent; and do not kill your people; for God is merciful to you. 30 And whoever does this aggressively
and unjustly, We will soon cast him into fire; and this
is easy to God. 31 If you shun the great things which
you are forbidden, We will do away with your evil (inclinations)[3] and cause you to enter an honourable place
of entering. 32 And do not covet that by which God has made some of you excel others; men shall have the benefit of what they earn and women shall have the benefit of what they earn; and ask God of His grace;
for God knows all things. 33 And to every one We have
appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave; and as to those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements, give them their portion;[4] surely God is a witness over all things.

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[1] This verse lays down the conditions under which those taken prisoners in war may be taken in marriage. I do not find any verse in the Holy Quran sanctioning what is called *concubinage.*

[2] Man is weak and could not chalk out a way free from error for himself. God gave him certain rules of guidance and thus made light his burden.

[3] I.e. if a man begins to avoid the commission of sin, the evil inclinations within him begin to die.

[4] In the pre-Islamic days, people were accustomed to enter into covenants one with another, by which they undertook to defend each other and to inherit one another; and when one of them died, the other was considered entitled to one-sixth of the property of the deceased. When the Muslims fled to Medina, the Holy Prophet made every Meccan emigrant enter into

SECTION 6.—**Disagreement between Husband and Wife**

34 Men are the maintainers of women, because God
has made some of them to excel others and because they
spend out of their property; [1] the good women are there-
fore obedient,[2] guarding the unseen [3] as God has guarded; [4]
and as to those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish
them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places, and
beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way
against them; for God is High, Great.[5] 35 And if you
fear a breach between the two, then appoint a judge from
his people and a judge from her people; if they both
desire agreement, God will effect harmony between them,
for God is Knowing, Aware.[6] 36 And serve God and do not
associate any thing with Him, and be good to the parents
and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and
the neighbour of (your) kin and the alien neighbour, and
the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and those
whom your right hands possess; [7] for God does not love

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a close relationship of brotherhood with one of the Medina citizens, so that (under the old custom) one of them would have become an heir to the other on his decease. But any such share was not allowed by the Holy Quran. This verse, however, recommends that something be given. The words *give them their portion* are taken as meaning *the rendering of assistance* in general, *doing acts of kindness and the giving of good advice*, while something may be settled by testament.

[1] The Arabic word for *maintainers* is *qawwámún*, which carries the idea of *guarding their interests* along with that of *furnishing them with means of subsistence.*

[2] Obedience here signifies obedience to God. This significance of the word is made clear by a comparison with 33 : 31, 33 : 35, and 66 : 5.

[3] *Guarding the unseen* is a euphemism for *guarding the husband's rights*, and implies chastity.

[4] As God has guarded their rights, i.e. upheld their rights against their husbands.

[5] As to beating which is allowed in the last resort in the case of a wife's desertion, two things must be borne in mind. Firstly, that this punishment can be resorted to only in case of extreme guilt, as a saying of the Holy Prophet in Sahih Muslim makes it plain: "When they receive visits from any one whom you do not like"; and secondly, that the beating should be so light as not to leave a mark. Ibn-i-Abbas allows only the use of a tooth-brush in such a case.

[6] There is much food for reflection in this for those who think that Islam allows divorce on the slightest pretext. When a breach occurs, judges must be appointed on both sides with the object of effecting a reconciliation; it is only when judges fail to bring about a reconciliation that a divorce is allowed. Thus it is only through judges that a divorce may be obtained either by the husband or by the wife.

[7] Thus the charity of Islam is not limited to one's own people or one's own co-religionists, but is extended to aliens also.

him who is proud, boastful: 37 Those who are niggardly and bid people to be niggardly and hide what God has given them out of His grace; and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement: 38 And those who spend their property to be seen of the people and do not believe in God nor in the last day; and as for him whose companion is the devil, an evil companion is he! 39 And what (harm) would it have done them if they had believed in God and the last day and spent of what God had given them? And God knows them. 40 Surely God does not do injustice to the weight of an atom, and if it is a good deed He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.[1] 41 How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring thee as a witness against these? 42 On that day will those who disbelieve and disobey the Apostle desire that the earth were levelled with them, and they shall not hide any word from God.

SECTION 7.—**Jewish Moral Degradation**

43 O you who believe! do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) what you say,[2] nor when you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution[3]—unless (you are) travelling on the road—until you have washed yourselves; and if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched the women,[4] and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth, and wipe your faces and your hands;[5] for God is Pardoning, Forgiving. 44 Hast thou not considered those to whom a portion of the book has been given? They buy error and desire that you should

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[1] Such is the ever-recurring description of the preponderance of mercy in Divine nature: good is always multiplied and evil nullified.

[2] This was the first step towards the prohibition of drink. It moreover shows that the man who says his prayers must know the meaning of what he says.

[3] The necessity to perform a total ablution or washing of the whole body arises in case of sexual intercourse.

[4] *The touching of women* is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

[5] This is technically called *tayammum* and consists in striking both hands on pure earth, or anything containing pure dust, and then passing the hands over the face and the backs of the hands. When water is not found, or is likely to do harm, *tayammum* suffices instead of *wudu*, or ablution before prayer.

go astray from the way: 45 And God best knows your enemies; and God suffices as a guardian, and God suffices as a helper. 46 From among the Jews are those who alter words from their places[1] and say: We have heard and we disobey; and: Hear, mayest thou not be made to hear! and: Listen to us, distorting (the word) with their tongues and taunting about religion;[2] and if they had said (instead): We have heard and we obey, and hearken, and grant us a little delay, it would have been better for them and more upright; but God has cursed them on account of their unbelief, so little it is that they believe. 47 O you who have been given the Book! believe that which we have revealed verifying what you have, before We alter faces then turn them on their backs,[3] or curse them as We cursed the violators of the Sabbath, and the command of God shall be executed. 48 God does not forgive the association of other gods with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases;[4] and whoever associates any thing with God, he devises indeed a great sin. 49 Hast thou not considered those who attribute purity to themselves? Nay, God purifies whom He pleases, and they shall not be wronged a whit. 50 See how they forge the lie against God and this is sufficient as a manifest sin.

SECTION 8.—**Muslims are given Kingdom**

51 Hast thou not considered those to whom a portion of the book has been given? They believe in enchant-

[1] The subject of the perversion of "holy writ" is specially dealt with in the Holy Quran in 2:75–79, 5:13, 41, and here. The verification referred to here in v. 47 and elsewhere implies only a verification of the general principles, and particularly of the prophecies contained in those books, and bearing witness to the truth of the previous revelation, and does not in any way negative the corruption and alteration of the text, which is only too apparent to be seriously contested.

[2] See note on 2:104.

[3] The phrase is evidently a metaphorical one, and *the alteration of faces* signifies *depriving them of greatness and prosperity and bringing on them disgrace and adversity.*

[4] The reference to polytheism, which is called *shirk* in the language of the Holy Quran, as the gravest sin of which man can be guilty, is made more than once. And this is not because *shirk* in any way diminishes the grandeur of the Divine Being, but because it lowers the dignity of human nature. Man is made to rule nature itself and all creatures, but when he lowers himself before mortals like himself, or before creatures lower than himself whom he was really made to rule, he sets at naught the very purpose of his creation.

ment and devils, and say of those who disbelieve: These
are better guided in the path than those who believe.[1]
52 These are they whom God has cursed, and whomever
God curses, thou shalt not find any helper for him. 53 Or
have they a share in the kingdom? But then they would
not give to people even the speck in the date-stone.
54 Or do they envy the people for what God has given
them of His grace? But indeed We have given to Abra-
ham's children the Book and the wisdom, and We have
given them a grand kingdom.[2] 55 So some of them
believe in him, and some of them turn away from him,
and hell is sufficient to burn. 56 Those who disbelieve
in Our communications, We shall make them enter fire;
so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned We will change
them for other skins,[3] that they may taste the chastisement;
surely God is Mighty, Wise. 57 And (as for) those who
believe and do good deeds, We will make them enter
gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them for ever;
they shall have therein pure mates, and We shall make
them enter happy shades. 58 God commands you to
make over trusts to those worthy of them,[4] and that when
you judge between people, you judge with justice; God
admonishes you with what is excellent; surely God is
Seeing, Hearing. 59 O you who believe! obey God and
obey the Apostle and those in authority from among
you; then if you quarrel about any thing, refer it to
God and the Apostle, if you believe in God and the

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[1] The Jews had given up their pure monotheism; they even believed in enchantment, sorcery, and divination, and as Islam condemns all these things, the Jews liked the superstitious Arab more than the rational Muslim.

[2] The kingdom of heaven, which is the grand kingdom, including both temporal and spiritual kingdom, was still in Abraham's house, but was now transferred from the descendants of Israel to those of Ishmael, in accordance with the covenant made with Abraham.

[3] The form used signifies the continuance of the torment in accordance with the metaphor of fire.

[4] In a saying of the Holy Prophet recorded in Bukharee, the wasting of a trust is explained as meaning the choosing of a ruler who is not worthy to rule. In the second part of the verse the rulers are enjoined to judge justly, and hence the first part clearly refers to the selection of rulers, and the people are called upon to make a choice of such men to rule over them as are worthy to rule. As the Muslims were being given a kingdom, they were told what rulers they should choose and how the rulers should exercise their authority.

last day; this is (the) better (part) and very good in the end.[1]

SECTION 9.—**Hypocrites disobey**

60 Hast thou not considered those who assert that they believe in what has been revealed to thee and what was revealed before thee? They desire to summon one another to the judgment of the devil,[2] though they were commanded to deny him, and the devil desires to lead them astray into a remote error. 61 And when it is said to them, Come to what God has revealed and to the Apostle, thou wilt see the hypocrites turning away from thee with (utter) aversion. 62 But how will it be when misfortune befalls them on account of what their hands have sent before? Then they will come to thee swearing by God: We did not desire (any thing) but good and concord. 63 These are they of whom God knows what is in their hearts; therefore turn aside from them and admonish them, and speak to them effectual words concerning themselves. 64 And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by God's permission; and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to thee and asked forgiveness of God, and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found God Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. 65 But no! by thy Lord! they do not believe until they make thee a judge of what has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find any straitness in their hearts as to what thou decidest and submit with entire submission. 66 And if We had prescribed for them, Lay down your lives or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it except a few of them;[3] and if

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[1] The passage lays down a most important rule for the guidance of Muslims. Above all authorities with a true Muslim is the authority of God and His Apostle, but those who are in authority are also to be obeyed. The words *ulul-amr*, or *those in authority*, have a wide significance, so that in different matters relating to the life of man different persons would be in authority. The term also includes the Muslim religious leaders, but as the verse lays down clearly, any leader, whether religious or temporal, who goes against the Holy Quran, should not be obeyed.

[2] The hypocrites in heart inclined to idols, or their diviners, who, being their leaders in devil-worship, are called *devils*.

[3] The companions of the Prophet had to lay down their lives in defence of their faith, and had to leave their homes for the sake of their religion. But the hypocrites at Medina were too weak of heart to undergo such hardships.

they had done what they are admonished, it would have
been better for them and best in strengthening (them);
67 And then We would have given them from Ourselves
a great reward, 68 And We would have guided them in
the right path. 69 And whoever obeys God and the
Apostle, these are with those upon whom God has bestowed
favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the
faithful and the good, and a goodly company are they!
70 This is grace from God and sufficient is God as the
Knower.

SECTION 10.—**Believers must defend themselves**

71 O you who believe! take your precaution, then
go forth in detachments or go forth in a body. 72 And
among you is he who would certainly hang back! If
then a misfortune befalls you he says: God conferred a
benefit on me that I was not present with them. 73 And
if grace from God come to you, he would cry out, as if
there had not been any friendship between you and him:
Would that I had been with them, then I should have
attained a mighty good fortune. 74 Therefore let those
fight in the way of God who sell this world's life for the
hereafter; and whoever fights in the way of God, then
be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a
mighty reward. 75 And what reason have you that you
should not fight in the way of God and of the weak among
the men and the women and the children who say: Our
Lord! cause us to go forth from this town, whose people
are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and
give us from Thee a helper! [1] 76 Those who believe
fight in the way of God, and those who disbelieve fight
in the way of the devil. Fight therefore against the
friends of the devil, the struggle of the devil is weak
indeed.

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[1] The verse further explains what is meant by fighting in the way of God. While most of the believers who had the means had escaped from Mecca, which is here spoken of as the city *whose people are oppressors*, there remained those who were weak and unable to undertake a journey. These were still persecuted and oppressed by the Meccans, as is clearly shown by the words of the verse, and not only men, but even women and young children were persecuted; fighting to deliver them from the persecution of the oppressors was really fighting in the way of God. The next verse shows that these very oppressors are spoken of as fighting in the way of the devil.

SECTION 11.—**Attitude of Hypocrites**

77 Hast thou not considered those to whom it was
said: Withhold your hands, and keep up prayer and pay
the poor-rate; but when fighting is prescribed for them,
lo! a party of them fear men as they ought to have feared
God or (even) with a greater fear, and say: Our Lord!
why hast Thou ordained fighting for us? Wherefore
didst Thou not grant us a delay to a near end?[1] Say:
The provision of this world is short, and the hereafter is
better for him who guards (against evil); and you shall
not be wronged the husk of a date-stone. 78 Wherever
you are, death will overtake you, though you are in towers,
raised high. And if a benefit comes to them, they say,
This is from God; and if a misfortune befalls them, they
say, This is from thee. Say, All is from God; but
what is the matter with these people that they do not
make approach to understanding what is told (them)?
79 Whatever benefit comes to thee (O man!), it is from
God, and whatever misfortune befalls thee it is from thy-
self;[2] and We have sent thee (O Prophet!) to mankind
as an apostle; and God is sufficient as a witness. 80 Who-
ever obeys the Apostle, he indeed obeys God; and those
who turn back, We have not sent thee as a keeper over
them. 81 And they say: Obedience. But when they
go out from thy presence, a party of them decide by night
upon doing otherwise than what thou sayest;[3] and God
writes down what they decide by night, therefore turn
aside from them and trust in God and God is sufficient

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[1] Had there been any hope of plunder to animate the ranks of Muslims, those who loved this world most (who are here called the hypocrites) would have been foremost in fighting; but as they knew that they were fighting against odds, they considered the execution of this order as equivalent to courting death, and requested to be granted a respite.

[2] Good and evil, or benefits and misfortunes, proceed from God; but while He sends benefits from Himself, i.e. out of His beneficence, no evil or misfortune afflicts a man unless his own hands have called for it. There is no discrepancy in the two statements, the one made at the end of the last verse, *all is from God*, and the other made here. The previous verse states that the hypocrites attributed their misfortunes to the Holy Prophet; they are told that misfortunes were sent by God. This verse tells them that though sent by God, yet the immediate cause of these misfortunes was to be found in their own doings.

[3] The reference here is to the secret counsels of the hypocrites who were always plotting against the Holy Prophet while they kept an appearance of obedience to him.

as a protector. 82 Do they not then meditate on the
Quran? And if it were from any other than God, they
would have found in it many a discrepancy.[1] 83 And
when there comes to them news of security or fear, they
spread it abroad; and if they had referred it to the Apostle
and to those in authority among them, those among them
who can search out the knowledge of it would have known
it, and were it not for the grace of God upon you and His
mercy, you would have certainly followed the devil save
a few. 84 Fight then in God's way; this is not imposed
on thee except in relation to thyself, and rouse the believers
to ardour; maybe God will restrain the fighting of those
who disbelieve, and God is strongest in prowess and strongest
to give an exemplary punishment. 85 Whoever joins
himself (to another) in a good cause shall have a share of
it, and whoever joins himself (to another) in an evil cause
shall have the responsibility of it; and God controls all
things. 86 And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet
with a better (greeting) than it or return it: for God takes
account of all things. 87 God, there is no god but He
—He will certainly gather you together on the resurrection
day, there is no doubt in it; and who is more true in
word than God?

SECTION 12.—How to deal with Hypocrites

88 What is the matter with you that you have become
two parties about the hypocrites, while God has made
them return (to unbelief) for what they have earned?[2]

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[1] The Quran was not written out and given on one occasion, but it continued to be delivered in small portions during twenty-three years under the most varying circumstances. From the solitary recluse of the cave of Hira, the Prophet had to pass through such a variety of circumstances to be the sole monarch and legislator of the whole of Arabia, that the life of no other individual human being affords us such a varying study. But what strikes one throughout the entire revelation is that it keeps up one and the same strain—absolute submission to God, entire trust in Him, perfect confidence of future success, a liberal view of humanity, an attitude of charity towards all nations and religions, and goodness to all alike. The spirit of the revelations to the solitary, persecuted, and rejected preacher of Mecca does not differ in these and a hundred other particulars from the spirit of the revelations to the sole temporal and spiritual monarch of Arabia. There are no discrepancies even in the details of narratives—such, for instance, as are met with in the Gospels.

[2] Clearly those waverers are implied here who went back to unbelief after they accepted Islam, and thus again joined the unbelievers.

Do you wish to guide him whom God has left in error?
And whomsoever God leaves in error, thou shalt by no
means find a way for him. 89 They desire that you should
disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you might
be (all) alike; therefore take not from among them friends
until they fly (their homes) in God's way; but if they
turn back, then seize them and kill them wherever you
find them, and take not from among them a friend or
a helper, 90 Except those who reach a people between
whom and you there is an alliance, or who come to you,
their hearts shrinking from fighting you or fighting their
own people; and if God had pleased, He would have
given them power over you, so that they should have
fought you; therefore if they withdraw from you and
do not fight you and offer you peace, then God has not
given you a way against them.[1] 91 You will find others
who desire that they should be safe from you and secure
from their own people; as often as they are sent back
to the mischief they get thrown into it headlong; therefore
if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) offer you
peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill
them wherever you find them; and against these We
have given you a clear authority.

SECTION 13.—The Murderer of a Muslim

92 And it does not behove a believer to kill a believer
except by mistake, and whoever kills a believer by mis-
take, he should free a believing slave, and blood-money
should be paid to his people unless they remit it as alms;
but if he be from a tribe hostile to you and he is a
believer, the freeing of a believing slave (suffices), and
if he is from a tribe between whom and you there is a
covenant, the blood-money should be paid to his people
along with the freeing of a believing slave; but he who
cannot find (a slave) should fast for two months suc-
cessively; a penance from God, and God is Knowing,
Wise. 93 And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his
punishment is hell, he shall abide in it; and God will

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[1] This verse explains the previous one, showing clearly that even waverers were not to be killed, or fought against, if they refrained from fighting, though they may have gone over to unbelief after accepting Islam. This is conclusive against death being a punishment for apostasy.

send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement. 94 O you who believe! when you go to war in God's way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you salutation, Thou art not a believer.[1] Do you seek goods of this world's life? But with God there are abundant gains; you too were such aforetime, then God conferred a benefit on you; therefore make investigation; surely God is aware of what you do. 95 The holders back from among the believers, not having any injury, and those who strive hard in God's way with their property and their persons, are not equal; God has made the strivers with their property and their persons to excel the holders back a (high) degree, and to each God has promised good; and God shall grant to the strivers above the holders back a mighty reward: 96 (High) degrees from Him and protection and mercy, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 14.—**Muslims among Enemy Tribes**

97 The angels shall say, when they cause to die those who were unjust to their souls: In what state were you? They shall say: We were weak in the earth. They shall say: Was not God's earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein? So these it is whose abode is hell, and it is an evil resort; 98 Except the weak from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape); 99 So these, it may be, God will pardon them, and God is Pardoning, Forgiving. 100 And whoever flies in God's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources; and whoever goes forth from his house flying to God and His Apostle, then death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with God and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

[1] The Muslims had to fight the enemy tribes, among whom there were some who had accepted Islam; others there might be who made a confession of Islam only to escape punishment. Whether the man was sincere in his avowal of Islam or otherwise, the Muslims were told that they should not kill him and should accept him as a Muslim brother, no more an enemy. The verse lays down a broad basis for Muslim brotherhood, in which every one is recognized as a Muslim who simply offers a salutation in the Islamic form. No searching inquiry as to the doctrines one holds is needed to recognize a man as a member of the Muslim brotherhood.

SECTION 15.—Prayer when fighting

101 And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer, if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress;[1] for the unbelievers are your open enemies. 102 And when thou art among them and keepest up the prayer for them, let a party of them stand up with thee, and let them take their arms; then when they have prostrated themselves let them go to your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come forward and pray with thee and let them take their precautions and their arms;[2] for those who disbelieve desire that you may be careless of your arms and your luggage, so that they may then turn upon you with a sudden united attack; and there is no blame on you, if you are annoyed with rain or if you are sick, that you lay down your arms, and take your precautions; surely God has prepared a disgraceful chastisement for the unbelievers. 103 Then when you have finished the prayer, remember God standing and sitting and reclining; but when you are secure (from danger) keep up prayer; for prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers. 104 And be not weakhearted in pursuit of the (enemy's) people; if you suffer pain, they (too) suffer pain as you suffer pain, and you hope from God what they do not hope; and God is Knowing, Wise.

SECTION 16.—Justice between Muslims and Non-Muslims

105 We have revealed the Book to thee with the truth that thou mayest judge between people as God has given thee insight; and be not a disputer in behalf of the treacherous,[3] 106 And ask forgiveness of God; for God is

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[1] The shortening of prayer, when there is fear of the enemy, is detailed in the next verse. Apart from this there is an ordinary shortening of prayer when one is travelling, and this consists in the reduction of four *rak'ats* to two *rak'ats*.

[2] Apparently each party finished its prayer with one *rak'at* only. Some are, however, of opinion that the second *rak'at* must be completed by the worshipper individually.

[3] The occasion of the revelation of these verses was a dispute between a man who professed Islam and the Jews, in which the judgment was given by the Holy Prophet against the Muslim. Tama bin Ubairaq had stolen a coat of mail and, having hidden it at a Jew's, afterwards accused the Jew of the theft, while his tribe supported him. The Holy Prophet,

Forgiving, Merciful. 107 And do not plead on behalf of
those who act unfaithfully to their souls; for God does
not love him who is treacherous, sinful; 108 They hide
themselves from men and do not hide themselves from
God, and He is with them when they meditate by night
words which please Him not, and God encompasses what
they do. 109 Behold! you are they who (may) plead
for them in this world's life, but who will plead for them
with God on the resurrection day, or who shall be their
protector? [1] 110 And whoever does evil or acts unjustly
to his soul, then asks forgiveness of God, he shall find
God Forgiving, Merciful. 111 And whoever commits a
sin, he only commits it against his own soul; and God
is Knowing, Wise. 112 And whoever commits a fault
or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes
upon himself the burden of a calumny and a manifest
sin.

SECTION 17.—**Hypocrites' Secret Counsels**

113 And were it not for God's grace upon thee and His
mercy, a party of them had designed to bring thee to
perdition, and they do not bring (aught) to perdition but
their own souls, and they shall not harm thee in any way;
and God has revealed to thee the Book and the wisdom,
and He has taught thee what thou didst not know, and
God's grace on thee is very great. 114 There is no good
in most of their secret counsels except (in his) who enjoins
charity or goodness or reconciliation between people; and
whoever does this, seeking God's pleasure, We will give
him a mighty reward. 115 And whoever acts hostilely
to the Apostle after that guidance has become manifest
to him, and follows other than the way of the believers,

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notwithstanding the open enmity of the Jews, cleared the Jew of the charge. Thus these verses lay down the broad principle that dishonesty must be punished, notwithstanding that one guilty of it may profess the religion of Islam and the party injured may be a non-Muslim or even an enemy of the Muslims. Every case must be decided on its merits, and the balance of justice must be held equal between Muslims and non-Muslims and between friends and foes. A slightly less scrupulous person would have been led away from the strict requirements of justice by the exigence of the case, for it was a time when every Muslim hand was sorely needed for the defence of Islam, and a verdict against a man supported by his whole tribe meant the loss of the entire tribe.

[1] This verse also commands strict justice between Muslims and the non-Muslims. Partiality for one's co-religionists is condemned.

We will turn him to that to which he has (himself) turned
and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort.[1]

SECTION 18.—Idolatry condemned

116 God does not forgive the setting up of other gods
with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom
He pleases; and whoever sets up any thing with God,
he indeed strays off into a remote error. 117 They do
not call besides Him on anything but idols, and they do
not call on anything but a rebellious devil, 118 God has
cursed him; and he said: I will take of Thy servants an
appointed portion: 119 And I will lead them astray and
excite in them vain desires, and bid them so that they
shall slit the ears of the cattle,[2] and I will bid them so that
they shall alter God's creation;[3] and whoever takes the
devil for a guardian rather than God, he indeed shall suffer
a manifest loss. 120 He gives them promises and excites
vain desires in them; and the devil does not promise them
but to deceive. 121 These are they whose abode is hell,
and they shall not find any refuge from it. 122 And
those who believe and do good, We will make them enter
into gardens in which rivers flow, to abide therein for
ever; (it is) a promise of God, true (indeed); and who
is truer of word than God? 123 It shall not be in accord-
ance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the
vain desires of the followers of the Book; whoever does
evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides God he will
find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper. 124 And
whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and
he (or she) is a believer—these shall enter the garden,
and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly. 125 And
who has a better religion than he who submits himself

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[1] This verse clearly speaks of the unbelievers and the hypocrites, who followed a way *other than the way* of the believers. Only a laboured distortion of the words could make it signify that it was a sin to differ from the majority of the Muslims on any question of religion.

[2] The practice of slitting or cutting off the ears of certain animals was a prevalent form of polytheism in Arabia, for such an animal was looked upon as devoted to certain idols.

[3] A comparison with 30 : 30 will show clearly that by *God's creation* is here meant the *religion of God*, because the true religion is the natural religion of man. By the devil's changing the creation of God is therefore meant the changing of the natural religion of man, which requires obedience to God and His laws.

entirely to God? and he is the doer of good (to others) and
follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and God
took Abraham as a friend. 126 And whatever is in the
heavens and whatever is in the earth is God's; and God
encompasses all things.

SECTION 19.—**Equitable Dealings with Women**

127 And they ask thee a decision about women. Say:
God makes known to you His decision concerning them,
and that which is recited to you in the Book,[1] concerning
orphans of the women whom you do not give what is
appointed for them while you are disinclined to marry
them,[2] and concerning the weak among children, and that
you should deal towards orphans with equity; and whatever
good you do, God surely knows it. 128 And if a woman
fears ill usage or desertion on the part of her husband,
there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation
between themselves, and reconciliation is better; and
there is a proneness to avarice in the minds; and if you
do good (to others) and guard (against evil), surely God
is aware of what you do. 129 And you have it not in your
power to do justice between wives, even though you may
covet (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total
disinclination, so that you leave her as it were in suspense;[3]
and if you effect a reconciliation and guard (against evil),
God is surely Forgiving, Merciful. 130 And if they
separate, God will render them both free from want out
of His ampleness, and God is Ample-giving, Wise. 131 And
whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth
is God's, and We enjoined those who were given the Book
before you and (We enjoin) you too that you should be

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[1] The reference is to the commencement of this chapter, v. 3. There is almost a consensus of opinion on this point, the construction being that a decision has already been given there.

[2] The Arabs were guilty of a double injustice to widows; they did not give them a share in the inheritance of their husbands, nor were they inclined to marry a widow who had children, because the responsibility for the maintenance of her children would in that case devolve upon them. Islam remedied both these evils; it gave a share of inheritance to the widow with a share also for the orphans; it commended the taking of such widows in marriage, and allowed polygamy expressly for this purpose. To set all doubts at rest on this point, the subject is repeated here.

[3] I.e. when conditions for a resort to polygamy are met with, equal love cannot be insisted upon, but there must be equality in outward treatment.

careful of (your duty to) God; and if you disbelieve,
then surely whatever is in the heavens and whatever is
in the earth is God's, and God is Self-sufficient, Praise-
worthy. 132 And whatever is in the heavens and what-
ever is in the earth is God's and God is sufficient as a
protector. 133 If He please, He can make you pass away,
O people! and bring others; and God has the power to do
this. 134 Whoever desires the reward of this world—
with God is the reward of this world and the hereafter;
and God is Hearing, Seeing.

SECTION 20.—Hypocrites side with the Enemy

135 O you who believe! be maintainers of justice,
bearers of witness for God's sake, though it may be against
your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if
he be rich or poor, God is most competent (to deal) with
both;[1] therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest
you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, God is
surely aware of what you do. 136 O you who believe!
believe in God and His Apostle, and the Book which He
has revealed to His Apostle and the Book which He revealed
before; and whoever disbelieves in God and His angels
and His books and His apostles and the last day, he
indeed strays off into a remote error. 137 Those who
believe then disbelieve, again believe and again dis-
believe, then increase in disbelief—God will not forgive
them nor guide them in the (right) path.[2] 138 Announce
to the hypocrites that they shall have a painful chastise-
ment, 139 Those who take the unbelievers for guardians
rather than believers. Do they seek honour from them?
Surely all honour is for God. 140 And indeed He has
revealed to you in the Book that when you hear God's

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[1] Or the meaning is, God is nearer to them both (in compassion). So you should neither be partial to the rich man on account of some favour that you may expect from him or some harm that you fear from him, nor should you state other than the truth when the person against whom you bear witness is a poor man, on account of compassion for him. Thus, neither ties of kinship and love nor considerations of fear, favour or compassion should make one swerve a hair's-breadth from the truth.

[2] The persons spoken of in this verse are the waverers who again and again went over to unbelief. God's not guiding them is the consequence of their own actions. They wavered first, but in the end became firm in disbelief.

communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit
with them until they enter into some other discourse ;[1] for
then you would be like them ; surely God will gather
together the hypocrites and the unbelievers all in hell ;
141 Those who wait for (misfortunes for) you ; and if you
get a victory from God, they say : Were we not with
you ? And if there is a chance for the unbelievers, they
say : Did we not acquire the mastery over you and defend
you from the believers ? So God shall judge between you on
the day of resurrection ; and God will by no means give
the unbelievers a way against the believers.

SECTION 21.—**End of the Hypocrites**

142 The hypocrites strive to deceive God, and He
shall requite their deceit to them ;[2] and when they stand
up to prayer, they stand up sluggishly ; they do it only
to be seen of men and do not remember God save a little,
143 Wavering between that (and this), (belonging) neither
to these nor to those ; and whomsoever God leaves in
error, thou shalt not find a way for him. 144 O you
who believe ! do not take the unbelievers for guardians,
rather than the believers ; do you desire that you should
give to God a manifest proof against yourselves ?
145 Surely the hypocrites are in the lowest stage of the
fire,[3] and thou shalt not find a helper for them, 146 Except
those who repent and amend and hold fast to God and
are sincere in their obedience to God ; these are with the
believers, and God will grant the believers a mighty reward.
147 Why should God chastise you if you are grateful and
believe ? And God is the Multiplier of rewards, Knowing.

PART VI

148 God does not love the public utterance of hurtful
speech, unless one has been wronged ; and God is Hearing,

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[1] The reference is to 6 : 68. The Muslims are not forbidden to listen to criticism of their religion. It is rather their duty, for how otherwise can they satisfy others as to the truth of Islam ? But they are forbidden to sit with those who ridicule their religion.

[2] See 2 : 9

[3] Insincerity in religion is the worst of all sins, and hence the hypocrites are spoken of as being in the worst condition.

Knowing.[1] 149 If you do good openly or do it in secret
or pardon evil, surely God is Pardoning, Powerful.
150 Those who disbelieve in God and His apostles and
(those who) desire to make a distinction between
God and His apostles[2] and say, We believe in some
and disbelieve in others, and desire to take a course be-
tween (this and) that, 151 These it is that are truly
unbelievers, and We have prepared for the unbelievers a
disgraceful chastisement. 152 And those who believe in
God and His apostles and do not make a distinction
between any of them—God will grant them their rewards;
and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 22.—Transgressions of the Jews

153 The followers of the Book ask thee to bring down
to them a book from heaven; indeed they demanded of
Moses a greater thing than that, for they said: Show us
God manifestly; so the rumbling overtook them on
account of their injustice. Then they took the calf (for
a god), after clear signs had come to them, but We par-
doned this; and We gave to Moses clear authority.
154 And We raised the mountain above them at their
covenant, and We said to them: Enter the door making
obeisance; and We said to them: Do not exceed the
limits of the Sabbath; and We made with them a firm
covenant. 155 But for their breaking their covenant
and their disbelief in the communications of God and
their killing the prophets wrongfully and their saying, Our
hearts are covered,—nay! God set a seal upon them
owing to their unbelief, so they do not believe but a little:
156 And for their unbelief and for their having uttered
against Mary a grievous calumny:[3] 157 And their saying:
We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the apostle
of God; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify
him, but he was made to resemble (one crucified), and

[1] The use of defamatory speech of every kind regarding others is strictly forbidden, but justification for it may exist in case a person has in some way been injured.

[2] To make a distinction between God and His apostles is to believe in one and reject the other.

[3] The calumny here referred to was that Mary was guilty of fornication. Jewish tradition shows that the man about whom they accused Mary was a Jew named Panther.

those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure;[1] 158 Nay! God exalted him in His presence;[2] and God is Mighty,

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[1] The several statements made in this passage are, (1) The Jews claimed that they killed Jesus; (2) Jesus did not die on the cross; (3) he was made to resemble a man who is killed or who dies on the cross; (4) the Jews and the Christians were both in doubt as to his death; and (5) the Jews did not kill him for sure. If we refer to the Gospels we find all these statements corroborated there. The following points may be noted: (1) Jesus remained on the cross for a few hours only, but death by crucifixion was always tardy. (2) The two men crucified with Jesus were still alive when taken down from the cross. (3) The breaking of legs was resorted to in the case of the two criminals, but dispensed with in the case of Jesus. (4) The side of Jesus being pierced, blood rushed out, and this was a certain sign of life. (5) Even Pilate did not believe that Jesus actually died in so short a time (Mark 15 : 44). (6) Jesus was not buried like the two criminals, but was given into the charge of a wealthy disciple of his, who lavished care upon him and put him in a spacious room hewn in the side of a rock. (7) When the tomb was seen on the third day, the stone was found to have been removed from its mouth, which would not have been the case if there had been a supernatural rising. (8) Mary, when she saw him, took him for the gardener (John 20 : 15), which shows that Jesus had disguised himself as a gardener. Such disguise would not have been needed if Jesus had risen from the dead. (9) It was in the same body of flesh that the disciples saw Jesus, and the wounds were still there deep enough for a man to thrust his hand in. (10) He still felt hunger and ate as his disciples ate (Luke 24 : 39-43). (11) Jesus Christ undertook a journey to Galilee with two of his disciples walking side by side with him, which shows that he was flying for refuge, for if his object had been to rise to heaven he would not have undertaken a journey to Galilee. (12) In all post-crucifixion appearances Jesus is found concealing and hiding himself as if he feared being discovered. (13) Jesus Christ prayed the whole night before his arrest to be saved from the accursed death on the cross, and he also asked his disciples to pray for him, and the prayers of a righteous man in distress and affliction are always accepted. He seems to have even received a promise from his Master to be saved, and it was to this promise that he referred when he cried out on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Heb. 5 : 7 makes the matter still more clear, for there it is plainly stated that the prayer of Jesus was accepted: "When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

All these testimonies show conclusively that Jesus did not die on the cross, and the various statements made in the Quran are thus proved to be true even with reference to his history as contained in the Gospels. Note that the Holy Quran does not negative Jesus being nailed to the cross, for the word *salb* (crucifying), according to all Arabic dictionaries, means *the causing of death by nailing to the cross*; see *Lisán ul 'Arab, Tájul 'Urus*, etc.

[2] Commenting on 3 : 54 where the *raf'* of Jesus is spoken of for the first time, Razi says: "Raf' here *is exalting in degree and in praise, not in place and direction.*" And in fact God's *raf'* of a man never carries any significance other than exalting in degree, and never has the word been used, when thus qualified, in any other sense in the Holy Quran, or the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Every Muslim is taught to pray *irfa'ni*

Wise. 159 And there is not one of the followers of the
Book but certainly believes in this before his death, and
on the day of resurrection he shall be a witness against
them.[1] 160 Wherefore for the iniquity of those who are
Jews did We disallow to them the good things which had
been made lawful for them, and for their hindering many
(people) from God's way, 161 And their taking usury—
though indeed they were forbidden it—and their devouring
the property of people falsely; and We have prepared
for the unbelievers from among them a painful chastise-
ment. 162 But the firm in knowledge among them and
the believers believe in what has been revealed to thee and
what was revealed before thee and those who keep up
prayer and give the poor-rate and the believers in God
and the last day, these it is to whom We will give a mighty
reward.

SECTION 23.—**Previous Revelation and Quran**

163 We have sent revelation to thee as We sent revela-
tion to Noah and the prophets after him, and We sent
revelation to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob
and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron
and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. 164 And
(We sent) apostles We have mentioned to thee before and
apostles We have not mentioned to thee; and to Moses

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several times in his daily prayers but nobody ever thinks that he is taught to pray to be taken up bodily to heaven: it is simply a prayer to be exalted in degree. And God is called *Ar-Ráfi'*, because, as all lexicons are agreed, He exalts the righteous in degree. Here the exaltation of Jesus is spoken of as against the Jewish assertion that he was killed on the cross. Deut. 21 : 23 explains this, for there we have, *he that is hanged is accursed of God*, and as the accursed one cannot be called honourable in the Divine presence, hence the negation of Jesus being killed on the cross and the affirmation that he was exalted in the Divine presence.

[1] Both the Jews and the Christians necessarily believe in the death of Jesus on the cross, but only the Christians are meant here. This is shown by the concluding words of the verse, for every prophet is spoken of as a witness against his own followers who did not act on his teachings or attributed false doctrines to him. Now the death of Jesus on the cross is the most essential principle of a Christian's faith. He admits the truth of Deut. 21 : 23, but he says that unless Jesus were accursed he would not take away the sins of those that believe in him. As in Gal. 3 : 13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on the tree." The words *before his death* allude to the confession of faith in the atoning death of Jesus which every Christian has to make on his death-bed.

God addressed His word, speaking (to him);[1] 165 (We sent) apostles as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against God after (the coming of) the apostles; and God is Mighty, Wise. 166 But God bears witness by what He has revealed to thee that He has revealed it with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness (also); and God is sufficient as a witness. 167 Those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from God's way—they indeed have strayed off into a remote error. 168 Those who disbelieve and act unjustly—God will not forgive them nor guide them to a path, 169 Except the path of hell, to abide in it for ever and this is easy to God. 170 O people! the Apostle has come to you with the truth from your Lord, wherefore believe, (it is) good for you; and if you disbelieve, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is God's; and God is Knowing, Wise. 171 O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against God, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only an apostle of God and His word which He communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him;[2] believe therefore in God and His apostles, and say not, Three. Desist,

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[1] These verses point out that revelation to man is one consistent fact in the history of the world, every nation receiving a revelation. The Unity of God is thus a universal fact but not so the Divinity of Jesus which is accepted only by one nation and that against their own previous revelation. V. 164 further lays down that there have been prophets whose names are not mentioned in the Holy Quran. The universal law of the raising of prophets is thus given elsewhere: "And there is not a nation but a warner has gone among them" (35 : 24).

[2] Jesus is not Divine but mortal—that is of course the plain import of the verse. But he is a prophet of God, and the word of God communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him. It should be noted that the Holy Quran carries on the controversy with the Jews and the Christians at the same time. The Christians called him a Divine person; the Jews denied that he was a prophet of God or a word or a spirit from Him. Hence while denying his Divinity, the Holy Book affirms his being a prophet of God and a word and a spirit from Him. The question is, is a word or a spirit from God something more than a mortal? If it were, the statement that he was not Divine would be falsified. I have already explained in my note on 3 : 44 why Jesus is called a word from God, and here it is made plain that by word is meant coming in fulfilment of a prophecy which was conveyed to Mary; and this is clearly a refutation of the Jewish calumny against Mary. "A spirit from Him" is a similar refutation. The very form adopted here shows that Jesus does not partake of the Divine; he is *a* spirit, and therefore there must be other spirits from God. The fact is that the Jews said that he came from the devil, because they called him the offspring of fornication; the Quran refutes this by saying that he came from God.

it is better for you ; God is only One God : far be it from His glory that He should have a son ; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His ; and God is sufficient as a protector.

SECTION 24.—Prophethood of Jesus

172 The Messiah does by no means disdain that he
should be a servant of God, nor do the angels who are
near to Him ; and whoever disdains His service and is
proud, He will gather them all together to Himself.
173 As for those who believe and do good, He will pay
them fully their rewards and give them more out of His
grace ; and as for those who disdain and are proud, He
will chastise them with a painful chastisement. 174 And
they shall not find for themselves besides God a guardian
or a helper. 175 O people! surely there has come to you
manifest proof from your Lord and We have sent to you
clear light. 176 So those who believe in God and hold
fast by Him, He will cause them to enter into His mercy
and grace and guide them to Himself on a right path.
177 They ask thee for a decision of the law. Say : God
gives you a decision concerning the person who has neither
parents nor offspring ; if a man dies (and) he has no
son and he has a sister, she shall have half of what he
leaves, and he shall be her heir if she has no son ; but if
there be two (sisters), they shall have two-thirds of what
he leaves ; and if there are brethren, men and women,
then the male shall have the like of the portion of two
females ; God makes clear to you, lest you err, and God
knows all things.[1]

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[1] The rule given here supplements the law of inheritance as given at the commencement of this chapter. The *kaláa* in this case has neither parents nor offspring as distinguished from the *kaláa* of v. 12, and this is the reason why the whole of the property goes to the brothers. Reversion to the law of inheritance just after speaking of Jesus Christ conveys a deeper meaning. It is a fact that no prophet appeared among the Israelites after Jesus Christ, and therefore his death really left Israel without a spiritual head who should rise to the eminence of prophethood. It is thus hinted that prophethood was now being transferred from the house of Israel to the brother tribe springing from Ishmael, in accordance with the prophecy contained in Deut 18 : 15–18.

CHAPTER 5

AL-MÂIDAH: THE FOOD

(*Medina*—16 *sections*; 120 *verses*)

THE name of this chapter is taken from the mention of a demand for *food* on the part of the followers of Jesus Christ, to which reference is made towards the end of this chapter; and as it deals with the Christians in particular, that incident is unquestionably one of its chief features, although the chapter deals with Christians in general.

This chapter stands in almost the same relation to the last as the 3rd to the 2nd. Thus, while the 4th chapter deals chiefly with the hypocrites, the 5th deals with those who had assumed open enmity to Islam, being interspersed here and there with directions for the Muslims. While the 4th chapter deals with the question of Jewish disobedience, this gives prominence to the Christian transgressions due to their inordinate worldly love, this distinction being made plain in the concluding portions of the two chapters.

The contents of this chapter are chiefly concerned with the Jewish and Christian violation of their covenants with an exhortation to the Muslims to remain true to their own. Attention to the latter point is drawn in the very opening verse of the chapter: "O you who believe! fulfil your obligations." This injunction is followed by certain details relating to the performance of the pilgrimage, to foods, and to social relations with other people. The second section, which calls attention to the duty of uprightness, is as it were a caution against laying too much stress upon details of the law to the utter neglect of the inner qualities which make the real man. The third section speaks of the covenants made with the Jews and the Christians, and after hinting at the violation of the covenant by the Christians in assigning a Divine dignity to a mere mortal, takes up the Jewish violation of the covenant in the fourth section, at the very outset of their national life, and points out the evil consequences of their disobedience. The fifth section, opening with a lesson to the Jews in Cain's aggression, plainly points towards the end to the punishment of the Jews who were now engaged in making war upon the Prophet, and the subject of the punishment of similar offences is continued in the sixth section. The seventh speaks of the relation of the Quranic revelation to previous revelations, and points out that this final revelation is really the fulfilment and perfection of all those revelations. The eighth section, however, warns the Muslims of the hostile attitude of the Jews and the Christians and those who apostatize, the subject being continued in the ninth, which tells of their mockery of the Muslim religion. The tenth introduces the subject of Christian deviation from the truth, while the eleventh proves that the Quran is not unjust to them on account of their enmity towards Islam, valuing the meekness of monks and priests among them, and recognizing their nearness to Islam in contrast to the Jews and the polytheists. The three

sections that follow are specially addressed to the believers, while hinting at Christian disregard of the middle course and of their aggressions against the Muslims. Thus the twelfth section, while warning the Muslims, on the one hand, of such practices as monkery, which required a man to deprive himself even of lawful things, cautions them on the other against the use of impure drugs, such as intoxicating liquors, and the acquisition of property by illegal means, such as in gambling, the two besetting sins of Christian nations, and requires obedience and regard of duty to be made the main principle of action. The thirteenth section, opening with an injunction requiring the Muslims not even to hunt wild animals and birds during the pilgrimage, lays stress on the security of the Kaba, containing probably an allusion to the attempts of a Christian nation to demolish it (see ch. 105), and a prophetic allusion as well perhaps to future designs of more powerful nations. The fourteenth section, containing further directions for the Muslims, lays special stress on the gravity of the sin of polytheism, which had led the Christians farthest away from the truth, notwithstanding their proximity to Islam. The two concluding sections of the chapter deal with the Christian religion more plainly, attention being drawn in the fifteenth to the Christian love of this life, the immediate disciples of Jesus demanding an abundance of worldly provisions, which finds an echo, perhaps, in the Lord's prayer asking for *daily bread*; while the sixteenth, which is the last section, contains a plain condemnation of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus out of the mouth of that prophet himself.

A consideration of the topics dealt with in this chapter as well as the opinions of different authorities lead us to the almost certain conclusion that this chapter follows in the order of revelation, as it does in arrangement, the last chapter, and the main portion of it was revealed within the years five to seven Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Obligations must be fulfilled

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O you who believe! fulfil the obligations.[1] The cattle
quadrupeds are allowed to you except that which is recited
to you, not violating the prohibition against game when
you are entering upon the performance of the pilgrimage;
God orders what He desires. 2 O you who believe!
do not violate the signs appointed by God[2] nor the sacred
month, nor (interfere with) the offerings, nor the victims
with garlands,[3] nor those repairing to the Sacred House

[1] I.e. covenants imposed by God as well as your own mutual agreements.

[2] Religious services in general or performances connected with the pilgrimage in particular.

[3] Camels meant for sacrifice were made to wear garlands, so that nobody should lay hands on them on the way.

seeking the grace and pleasure of their Lord; and when you are free from the obligations of the pilgrimage, then hunt; and let not hatred of a people—because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque—incite you to exceed the limits, and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression;[1] and be careful of (your duty to) God: for God is severe in requiting (evil). 3 Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of God has been invoked, and the strangled (animal) and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall and that killed by being smitten with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten, except what you slaughter, and what is sacrificed on stones set up[2] (for idols) and that you divine by the arrows,[3] that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion;[4] but whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then God is Forgiving, Merciful. 4 They ask thee as to what is allowed to them. Say: The good things are allowed to you, and what you have taught the beasts and birds of prey, training them to hunt—you teach them of what God has taught you—so eat of that which they

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[1] The principle laid down here as to uprightness of conduct in dealing even with those whom we hate is one which is not met with anywhere but in Islam, and the international law of modern Europe stands sorely in need of such a principle of uprightness. Hence Islam alone can serve as an international law, requiring equal treatment for all nations.

[2] Stones were set up around the Kaba over or near which it was customary to kill animals as offerings to certain idols, their blood being sprinkled and flesh laid on the stones.

[3] In the pre-Islamic days when one desired to make a journey, or to get married, or to perform some other great affair, he drew out arrows, on one of which was written "My Lord has commanded me," on a second, "My Lord has forbidden me," while a third arrow was blank. He did or refrained from doing the desired thing according to the arrow which came forth, repeating the operation if a blank arrow came out. Many were the superstitions which Islam swept off.

[4] The very subject matter of the verse shows that it must have been revealed towards the close of the Holy Prophet's life, and hence it is held by all authorities that no precept was revealed after this. The Prophet died eighty-one days after its revelation. This verse is a clear testimony to the perfection of religion in Islam, no such claim being made by any other book or religion. Hence it was that Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was the last of the prophets, because religion being perfected, no prophet was needed after him.

catch for you and mention the name of God over it; and be careful of (your duty to) God; surely God is swift in reckoning.
5 This day (all) the good things are allowed to you, and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them;[1] and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you), when you have given them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret;[2] and whoever denies faith, his work is of no account, and in the hereafter he shall be a loser.

SECTION 2.—Duty of Uprightness

6 O you who believe! when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads, and (wash) your feet to the ankles; and if you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves); and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith; God does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may be grateful.
7 And remember the favour of God on you and His covenant with which He bound you firmly,[3] when you said: We have heard and we obey; and be careful of (your duty to) God, for God knows what is in the hearts.
8 O you who believe! be upright for God, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) God; for God is Aware of what you do.

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[1] Hence animals slaughtered by people of other religions are allowed, but anything which is expressly forbidden does not become lawful simply because it is offered by a Jew or a Christian.

[2] The Jewish law makes no exception, see Deut. 7 : 3 : "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son." Paul follows the Jewish law: "Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6 : 14).

[3] I.e. the covenant of Islam.

9 God has promised to those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward. 10 And (as for) those who disbelieve and reject Our communications, these are the inmates of the flaming fire. 11 O you who believe! remember God's favour on you when a people had determined to stretch forth their hands towards you, but He withheld their hands from you, and be careful of (your duty to) God; and on God let the believers rely.[1]

SECTION 3.—Jewish and Christian Covenants

12 And God made a covenant with the children of Israel, and We raised up among them twelve chieftains;[2] and God said: I am with you; if you keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and believe in My apostles and assist them and set apart for God a goodly portion, I will cover your evil deeds, and I will cause you to enter into gardens in which rivers flow, but whoever disbelieves from among you after that, he indeed shall lose the right way. 13 But on account of their breaking their covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard; they altered the words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; and thou shalt always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them; so pardon them and turn away; for God loves those who do good (to others). 14 And with those who say, We are Christians, We made a covenant, but they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; therefore We excited enmity and hatred among them to the day of resurrection;[3] and God will inform them of what they did. 15 O followers of the Book! Our Apostle has come to you making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much; indeed, there has

[1] The occasions on which the enemies of Islam endeavoured to take away the life of the Prophet or to exterminate the Muslims are too numerous to mention here. This is an obvious reference to those Quraish and their allies who left no stone unturned to destroy the Muslim community. The commentators, however, think that there is special reference to the attempt made by the Bani Nadir on the life of the Holy Prophet.

[2] See Num. 1 : 5–15.

[3] The prophecy that there shall always be hatred and enmity between the various Christian peoples has proved true in all ages, and never more clearly than in the great European war of our own day. They will find peace and concord only when they accept Islam.

come to you light and a clear book from God; 16 With
it God guides him who will follow His pleasure into the
ways of peace and brings them out of darkness into light
by His will and guides them to the right path. 17 They
certainly disbelieve who say: God—He is the Messiah,
son of Mary. Say: Who could control anything as
against God when He wished to destroy the Messiah
son of Mary and his mother [1] and all those on the earth?
And God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth
and what is between them; He creates what He pleases;
and God has power over all things. 18 And the Jews and
the Christians say: We are the sons of God and His beloved
ones. Say: Why does He then chastise you for your
faults? [2] Nay, you are mortals from among those whom
He has created; He forgives whom He pleases and chas-
tises whom He pleases; and God's is the kingdom of the
heavens and the earth and what is between them, and
to Him is the eventual coming. 19 O followers of the
Book! indeed Our Apostle has come to you explaining to
you after a cessation of the (mission of the) apostles,[3] lest
you say: There came not to us a giver of good news or a
warner. So indeed there has come to you a giver of good
news and a warner; and God has power over all things.

SECTION 4.—Israelites' Violation of Covenant

20 And when Moses said to his people: O my people!
remember the favour of God upon you when He raised
prophets among you and made you kings and gave you
what He had not given to any other among the nations: [4]

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[1] The meaning is that Jesus Christ and his mother Mary, and all those who were on the earth, tasted equally of death; hence Jesus Christ was an ordinary human being and not God, for if he had been God he would not have died *In* sometimes signifies *iz* or *when*, and so it does here.

[2] The Divine law of evil being followed with evil consequences in this world had not ceased to work at the advent of either Moses or Jesus.

[3] Six centuries had elapsed since the appearance of any prophet in any country when the great Arabian Prophet made his appearance. No nation in the world claims the appearance of any apostle in it between the advent of Jesus Christ and that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

[4] There is no anachronism here. Not only had two prophets, Moses and Aaron, already appeared among them, but with the Mosaic law was laid down the basis of a dispensation which gave them promise of numerous prophets appearing among them. And politically they had no doubt already emerged as an independent nation, being masters of themselves and no more slaves of their Egyptian masters.

21 O my people! enter the Holy Land which God has prescribed for you and turn not on your backs, for then you will turn back losers. 22 They said: O Moses! there are mighty men in it, and we will on no account enter it until they go out from it, so if they go out from it, then we will enter.[1] 23 Two men of those who feared, upon both of whom God had bestowed (His) favour, said: Enter upon them by the gate, for when you have entered it you shall surely be victorious, and on God should you rely if you are believers.[2] 24 They said: O Moses! we shall never enter it so long as they are in it; go therefore thou and thy Lord, and fight you both; here will we sit down. 25 He said: My Lord! I have no control (upon any) but my own self and my brother; therefore make a separation between us and (this) transgressing people. 26 He said: So it shall be forbidden to them for forty years; they shall wander about in the land, so do not grieve for (this) transgressing people.[3]

SECTION 5.—**Cain's Aggression**

27 And relate to them the story of the two sons of Adam with truth when they both offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: I will slay thee. (The other) said: God only accepts from the righteous:[4] 28 If thou wilt stretch forth thy hand towards me to slay me, I am not going to stretch forth my hand towards thee to slay thee; I do fear God, the Lord of the worlds: 29 I wish

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[1] See Num. 13 : 32 and Num. 14 : 1–4.

[2] See Num. 14 : 6–9.

[3] "Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it" (Num. 14 : 23). The forty years spoken of here represent the life of that generation.

[4] The reference is apparently to the story of Cain and Abel. Compare Gen. 4 : 3–12. Some are, however, of opinion that the reference is to two men from among the Israelites, because every man may be spoken of as a son of Adam. The whole story may be taken allegorically to refer to the Jewish plots against the Holy Prophet, where the Israelites may be taken for the aggressive and sinful brother and the Ishmaelites, as represented by the Holy Prophet, for the righteous one. It may be noted that in v. 11 we have a reference to the Jewish plots against the Holy Prophet's life, and the two sections that follow are, as it were, parenthetical, reminding the Jews and the Christians of their covenants and their violation of them, and the subject of v. 11 is continued in this and the following section.

that thou shouldst bear the sin against me[1] and thy own
sin, so thou wouldst be of the inmates of the fire, and this
is the recompense of the unjust. 30 And his mind facili-
tated to him the slaying of his brother, so he slew him ; and
he became one of the losers. 31 Then God sent a crow
digging up the earth so that he might show him how he
should cover the dead body of his brother.[2] He said:
Woe me! do I lack the strength that I should be like
this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? And
he became of those who regret. 32 For this reason did
We prescribe to the children of Israel that whoever slays
anyone, unless it be for man-slaughter or for mischief
in the land, it is as though he slew all men ; and whoever
saves a life, it is as though he saved the lives of all men ;
and Our apostles did come to them with clear arguments,
but even after that many of them act extravagantly in
the land. 33 The punishment of those who wage war
against God and His Apostle and strive to make mischief
in the land is only this, that they should be murdered
or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut
off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned ;[3]
this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in
the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement,
34 Except those who repent before you have them in
your power ; so know that God is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 6.—**Punishment of Offenders**

35 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to)
God and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard

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[1] *Ismi* here means not ***my sin***, but ***the sin committed against me***, i.e. ***the sin of murder***; while by *ismika* is meant *thy sin*, i.e. ***his previous sin*** on account of which his offering was not accepted.

[2] The Bible is silent on this point; but there is nothing improbable in primitive man having learnt some things from other creatures.

[3] It has generally been accepted that dacoits and murderers who cause disorder in a settled state of society are spoken of in this verse. The punishment prescribed is of four kinds, which clearly shows that the punishment to be inflicted in any particular case would depend upon the circumstances of the case. If murder has been committed in the course of dacoity, the punishment must include the execution of the culprit, which may take the form of crucifixion if the offence is so heinous or the culprit has caused such terror in the land that the leaving of his body on the cross is necessary as a deterrent. Where the dacoits have committed excesses, their hands and feet may be cut off. In other cases, the punishment may be imprisonment.

in His way that you may be successful. 36 Those who disbelieve, even if they had what is in the earth, all of it, and the like of it with it, that they might ransom themselves with it from the chastisement of the day of resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. 37 They would desire to go forth from the fire, and they shall not go forth from it, and they shall have a lasting chastisement. 38 And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from God; and God is Mighty, Wise.[1] 39 But whoever repents after his iniquity and reforms (himself), God will turn to him (mercifully); for God is Forgiving, Merciful. 40 Dost thou not know that God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He chastises whom He pleases, and forgives whom He pleases; and God has power over all things. 41 O Apostle! let not those grieve thee who strive together in hastening to unbelief from among those who say with their mouths, We believe, and their hearts do not believe, and from among those who are Jews; they are listeners for the sake of a lie, listeners for another people who have not come to thee; they alter the words after (knowing) their places, saying: If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious; and as for him whose temptation God desires, thou canst not control anything for him with God. These are they for whom God does

[1] In the case of dacoity four grades of punishment are mentioned, the severest being crucifixion and the mildest imprisonment. It is evident that theft is not as serious a crime as dacoity, and hence the mildest punishment for it could not be severer than the mildest punishment for dacoity. Hence the cutting off of hands is only the severest punishment for theft while the mildest punishment is imprisonment, and there are several considerations here showing that the severer punishment of the cutting off of hands may ordinarily be reserved for habitual thiefs: (*a*) The punishment is called exemplary, and exemplary punishment could only be inflicted where the crime is very serious or the offender is an habitual criminal. (*b*) The next verse shows that the punishment of cutting off the hand is only for a criminal *who does not reform*, i.e. *for the habitual offender*. To give him a chance to reform it is necessary that he should be given freedom of action before the more serious punishment is inflicted. (*c*) The punishment of the cutting off of hands has been mentioned in connection with the more serious crimes spoken of in v. 33, while even those serious crimes may be punished only with imprisonment, and therefore mere stealing, which is by no means as serious an offence as dacoity unless it becomes habitual, need not be punished with such extreme severity.

not desire that He should purify their hearts; they shall
have disgrace in this world, and they shall have a grievous
chastisement in the hereafter. 42 (They are) listeners of a
lie, devourers of what is forbidden; therefore if they come
to thee, judge between them or turn aside from them, and
if thou turnest aside from them, they shall not harm thee
in any way; and if thou judgest, judge between them
with equity; for God loves those who judge equitably.[1]
43 And how do they make thee a judge and they have
the Torah wherein is God's judgment,[2] yet they turn back
after that, and they are not believers.

SECTION 7.—**Quran and Previous Scriptures**

44 We revealed the Torah, in which was guidance and
light;[3] with it the prophets who submitted themselves
(to God) judged (matters) for those who were Jews, and
the masters of Divine knowledge and the doctors, because
they were required to guard the Book of God,[4] and they
were witnesses thereof; therefore fear not the people and
fear Me, and do not take a small price for My communica-

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[1] By the agreement drawn up between the various nationalities of Medina on the advent of the Holy Prophet there, all disputes were to be referred to the Holy Prophet, but the Jews had by this time become so inimical to him that he is allowed to refuse to judge between them. In case he judged between them, he is still told to judge with equity. To be equitable notwithstanding the severest enmity and notwithstanding the knowledge that the Jews were always plotting with the enemies of Islam for its extirpation, is that trait in the character of the Holy Prophet which marks him out as having reached the highest point of moral rectitude to which man can attain.

[2] On account of the severity of the ordinances contained in the Mosaic law, they wanted not to be judged according to them, but according to the milder laws of Islam. This was plainly inconsistent with their belief in the law of Moses.

[3] Verses 44-47 do not afford any evidence of the purity of the text of the Torah and the Gospel. That the Torah and the Gospel were Divine revelations containing light and guidance, no Muslim has ever denied. What is denied is that that light and guidance were kept intact throughout the ages, and that is not affirmed here. On the other hand, it is here denied that these two books were meant for the whole world and for all ages. Nay, even the Israelites stood in need of further light which was brought to them from time to time by their prophets, the Gospel being one such light; see v. 46.

[4] This statement by no means implies that they actually guarded the Book so as to be able to transmit it in all its purity. They were no doubt required to do it, but it is nowhere stated that they had succeeded in guarding it. In fact they only guarded a part of it as indicated by the use of the word ***min*** before *kitáb*, and it was the part which was kept safe in practice.

tions; and whoever does not judge by what God revealed,
these are the unbelievers.[1] 45 And We prescribed to
them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose
for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and (that
there is) reprisal in wounds:[2] but he who forgoes it,
it shall be an expiation for him; and whoever does not
judge by what God revealed, these are the unjust. 46 And
We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary,
verifying what was before him of the Torah,[3] and We
gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light,
and verifying what was before it of the Torah, and a
guidance and an admonition for the righteous: 47 And
the followers of the Gospel should have judged by what
God revealed in it; and whoever does not judge by what
God revealed, these are the transgressors. 48 And We
have revealed to thee the Book with the truth, verifying
what is before it of the book and a guardian over it,[4]
therefore judge between them by what God has revealed,
and do not follow their low desires (to turn away) from
the truth that has come to thee. For every one of you
did We appoint a law and a way,[5] and if God had pleased
He would have made you (all) a single people, but that
He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive
with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to God
is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that
in which you differed; 49 And that thou shouldst judge
between them by what God has revealed, and do not
follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they
seduce thee from part of what God has revealed to thee;

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[1] The people who professed to believe in the Mosaic law could not be called believers if they did not judge according to that law.

[2] The Quran has retained only the rule of life for life, i.e. requires a death penalty for the murderer. And instead of "eye for eye," etc., it has the comprehensive rule: "And the recompense of evil is punishment like it" (42 : 40).

[3] Notwithstanding clear departure from the Mosaic law in many points, the Gospel is spoken of as verifying the Torah. This shows that verification signifies only corroboration of the general principles.

[4] The Quran is called *muhaimin* or *Guardian* over all previous revelation, thus showing that whatever was of permanent value in the previous scriptures has been preserved in the Quran, and secured from the corruption which it was undergoing in them.

[5] The appointment of a law and a way for every one refers to the giving of different laws to different nations in accordance with their requirements before the revelation of the Holy Quran, which fulfilled the requirements of all nations and all ages.

but if they turn back, then know that God desires to afflict them on account of some of their faults; and many of the people are surely transgressors.
50 Is it then the judgment of ignorance that they desire? And who is a better judge than God for a people who believe firmly?

SECTION 8.—Muslims and their Enemies

51 O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends;[1] they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, he too is one of them; surely God does not guide the unjust people.
52 So you will see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us; but it may be that God will bring the victory or a punishment from Himself, so that they shall regret on account of what they hid in their souls.
53 And those who believe will say: Are these they who swore by God with the most forcible of their oaths that they were with you? Their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall become losers.
54 O you who believe! should one of you turn back from his religion, then God will bring a people whom He shall love and they (too) shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in God's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer;[2] this is God's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and God is Ample-giving, Knowing.
55 Only God is your guardian and His apostle and those who believe, those who keep

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[1] When two nations are at war, an individual of one nation having friendly relations with the enemy nation is treated as an enemy; that is exactly what the Quran requires when it says: "And whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, he too is one of them." Otherwise it could not have allowed the loving relation of husband and wife between a Muslim and non-Muslim which it has done in the beginning of this chapter. See v. 5. The mention of calamity and victory in the verses that follow shows that the prohibition is due to a state of war existing between the two communities.

[2] The Prophet's life at Medina affords clear proof that apostasy never thinned the ranks of Islam, and if one man apostatized, a number of people joined the ranks of Islam and fought in its defence. Three tribes are said to have apostatized towards the close of the Prophet's life, but as these were dealt with in the time of Abu Bakr, the prophetic reference in these words is clearly to Abu Bakr's caliphate. Thus Abu Bakr and his helpers and advisers are the people who are here spoken of as loving God and being His beloved ones.

up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and they bow down.
56 And whoever takes God and His Apostle and those
who believe for a guardian, the party of God shall then
be triumphant.

SECTION 9.—The Mockers

57 O you who believe! do not take for guardians those
who take your religion for a mockery and a joke, from
among those who were given the Book before you and
the unbelievers; and be careful of (your duty to) God if
you are believers. 58 And when you call to prayer they
make it a mockery and a joke; this is because they are a
people who do not understand. 59 Say: O followers of
the Book! do you hate us (for aught) except that we
believe in God and in what has been revealed to us and
what was revealed before, and that most of you are trans-
gressors? 60 Say: Shall I inform you of (him who is)
worse than this in retribution from God? (Worse is he)
whom God has cursed and brought His wrath upon, and
of whom He made apes and swine, and he who served
the devil; these are worse in place and more erring from
the straight path.[1] 61 And when they come to you,
they say: We believe; and indeed they come in with
unbelief and they go forth with it; and God knows best
what they conceal. 62 And thou wilt see many of them
striving with one another to hasten in sin and exceeding
the limits and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired;
evil is that which they do. 63 Why do not the learned
men and the doctors of law prohibit them from their
speaking of what is sinful and their eating of what is
unlawfully acquired? Evil is that which they work.
64 And the Jews say: The hand of God is tied up! Their
hands shall be shackled and they shall be cursed for what
they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out,[2] He

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[1] It is clear that those who are spoken of here are the Jews and the Christians, and the reference in some of them being made apes and swine is to their spiritual condition; see note on 2:65. The concluding words show that the people who were thus made apes and swine were still men, because apes and swine could not be said to be erring from the straight path. The next verse makes this plainer, for these very apes and swine are there described as coming to the Apostle with unbelief and going away with unbelief.

[2] The Jews taunted the Muslims because they raised subscriptions for the defence of the Muslim community; compare 3:180.

expends as He pleases; and what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord will make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; and We have put enmity and hatred among them till the day of resurrection; whenever they kindle a fire for war, God puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land; and God does not love the mischief-makers.
65 And if the followers of the Book had believed and guarded (against evil), We would have covered their evil deeds and We would have made them enter gardens of bliss.
66 And if they had kept up the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet; there is a party of them keeping to the moderate course, and most of them—evil is that which they do.[1]

SECTION 10.—Christian Deviation

67 O Apostle! deliver what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord; and if thou dost it not, thou hast not delivered His message, and God will protect thee from the people; surely God does not guide the unbelieving people.[2]
68 Say: O followers of the Book! you follow no good till you keep up the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord;[3] and that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord shall make many of them increase in inordinacy and unbelief; grieve not therefore for the unbelieving people.
69 Those who believe and the Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians—whoever believes in God and the last day and does good—they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.
70 Certainly We made a covenant with the children of Israel and We sent to them apostles; whenever there came to them an

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[1] By the keeping up of the Torah and the Gospel is meant their preserving these books in the right state and acting up to them. The eating from above is in reference to spiritual food, or receiving of the Divine revelation, and eating from beneath their feet signifies the earthly provisions; i.e. they would have abundance of both.

[2] At Medina the Prophet had many more enemies than at Mecca and he had also to carry on a war struggle. Hence the promise of protection against all enemies.

[3] They had not even preserved the Torah and the Gospel in their purity, and whatever remained in their hands of the original teachings of the prophets they did not act upon.

apostle with what their souls did not desire, some (of them) did they call liars and some they slay. 71 And they thought that there would be no affliction, so they became blind and deaf; then God turned to them mercifully, but many of them became blind and deaf;[1] and God is well seeing what they do. 72 Certainly they disbelieve who say: God, He is the Messiah, son of Mary; and the Messiah said: O children of Israel! serve God, my Lord and your Lord.[2] Whoever associates (others) with God, God has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust. 73 Certainly they disbelieve who say: God is the third (person) of the three;[3] and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve. 74 Will they not then turn to God and ask His forgiveness? And God is Forgiving, Merciful. 75 The Messiah, son of Mary, was but an apostle; apostles before him had indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food.[4] See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away. 76 Say: Do you serve besides God that which does not control for you any harm or any profit? And God—He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 77 Say: O followers of the Book! be not unduly immoderate in your religion, and do not follow the low

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[1] Although they had been repeatedly warned of the afflictions which would befall them, they still thought that, being a favoured nation, they would not suffer punishment for their evil deeds. They had been subjected to great sufferings at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian rulers who followed him, large numbers having been slain and the rest taken prisoners. Becoming blind and deaf a second time refers to the Christians who deified Jesus. This is made clear in the next verse.

[2] "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4 : 10).

[3] The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is here plainly referred to. It should be noted that the name of Mary is not mentioned in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity, neither here nor in 4 : 171. But as the Christians, especially the Roman Catholics, invested Mary with the Divine character of being the mother of God, the Quran often mentions her along with Jesus as being an ordinary mortal.

[4] Feeling hungry and partaking of food shows that both Jesus and his mother were ordinary mortals. If Jesus had been above mortals he would also have been above the needs of mortals, the most essential of which is partaking of food, without which no human being can live, but of which the Supreme Being has no need.

desires of people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path.[1]

SECTION 11.—Christian Nearness to Islam

78 Those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary; this was because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.[2] 79 They used not to forbid each other the hateful things (which) they did; evil was that which they did. 80 Thou wilt see many of them befriending those who disbelieve; evil is that which their souls have sent before for them, that God became displeased with them, and in chastisement shall they abide. 81 And had they believed in God and the prophet[3] and what was revealed to him, they would not have taken them for friends, but most of them are transgressors. 82 Thou wilt find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and thou wilt find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say, We are Christians; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly.[4]

PART VII

83 And when they hear what has been revealed to the Apostle, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears

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[1] The Christians are here told that in making the doctrine of Trinity the basis of their religion they had only followed an erroneous doctrine preached by a people before them. Recent criticism has shown that the Christians have only followed previous idolatrous nations in this.

[2] After Moses, David and Jesus, who represent the highest achievement of Israelite prophethood in temporal and spiritual glory, spoke of the advent of the Holy Prophet in unmistakable terms. The *curse* is used here in its original sense. Both prophets had warned the Jews that their transgressions called for Divine punishment which should soon overtake them if they did not mend their ways. The time of both was followed by a great affliction overtaking the Jews, in the respective depredations of the Babylonian kings and the destruction wrought by Titus.

[3] By the *prophet* here is meant Moses, who clearly foretold the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad; therefore the Jews, if they believed in Moses, could not have joined the opponents of the Holy Prophet in opposition to him.

[4] The verse shows the better side of the Christian religion, and it affords a convincing proof of the cosmopolitan nature of the religion of Islam which did not deprecate goodness even though manifested in a people who had adopted open enmity towards it.

on account of the truth that they recognize; they say: Our Lord! we believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of truth).[1] 84 And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in God and in the truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that our Lord should cause us to enter with the good people? 85 So God rewarded them, on account of what they said, with gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the reward of those who do good. 86 And (as for) those who disbelieve and reject Our communications, these are the companions of the flaming fire.

SECTION 12.—Muslims warned

87 O you who believe! do not forbid (yourselves) the good things which God has made lawful for you and do not exceed the limits; for God surely does not love those who exceed the limits.[2] 88 And eat of the lawful and good (things) that God has given you, and be careful of (your duty to) God, in whom you believe. 89 God does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths,[3] but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men out of the middling (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck; but whosoever cannot find (means), then fasting for three days; this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear; and guard your oaths.[4] Thus does God make clear to you His communications, that you may be grateful. 90 O you who

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[1] This refers to the Christians who believed. An important personage belonging to this class was the Negus of Abyssinia, in whose dominions the Muslims found shelter in the early days of the Prophet's mission, when compelled to fly from Mecca on account of the severe persecutions of the Quraish.

[2] These words not only denounce such self-denying practices as those adopted by the Christian monks, spoken of in the last section, but also the act of depriving oneself of Divine blessings by falling into evil and slothful habits.

[3] It is wrong to suppose that this verse sanctions the expiation of all kinds of oaths. Reading it along with the previous verses, it is clear that the oaths referred to are in relation to vows, etc., by which one forbids oneself what is otherwise lawful. Compare 2 : 225, 226, forbidding the taking of oaths that prevent one doing some good.

[4] The words carry a double significance; *do not take oaths* unless the necessity is urgent, and *keep your oaths*, i.e. be true to oaths when you have taken them; hence oaths cannot be expiated at will.

believe! intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and the (divining) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it therefore that you may be successful.[1]
91 The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of God and from prayer; will you then desist?
92 And obey God and obey the Apostle and be cautious; but if you turn back, then know that only a clear deliverance of the message is (incumbent) on Our Apostle.
93 On those who believe and do good there is no blame for what they eat, when they guard (against evil) and believe and do good deeds, then they are careful (of their duty) and believe, then they are careful (of their duty) and do good (to others), and God loves those who do good (to others).

SECTION 13.—Security of the Kaba

94 O you who believe! God will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands and your lances can reach, that God might know who fears Him in secret; so whoever exceeds the limit after this, he shall have a painful chastisement.
95 O you who believe! do not kill game while you are on pilgrimage,[2] and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation (of it) is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge, as an offering to be brought to the Kaba, or the expiation (of it) is the feeding of the poor or the equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed; God has pardoned what is gone by; and whoever returns (to it), God will inflict retribution on him; and God is Mighty, Lord of retribution.
96 Lawful to you is the game of the sea and its

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[1] This verse totally prohibits all intoxicants and games of chance. It is related that when this verse was revealed, a crier proclaimed in the streets of Medina that wine was prohibited, and in response to this every jar of wine in Muslim houses was emptied, so that wine flowed in the streets. Never in the history of the world was such a deep-rooted evil as drink so suddenly yet so completely eradicated. For stones set up and divining arrows see notes on v. 3.

[2] The prohibition to kill game when on pilgrimage is a token of respect for the security of the Kaba, in addition to being a measure necessary for the safety of life in such a large gathering, where liberty to hunt would most probably lead to dangerous accidents to human life and limb.

food,[1] a provision for you and for the travellers, and the
game of the land is forbidden to you so long as you are on
pilgrimage, and be careful of (your duty to) God to whom
you shall be gathered. 97 God has made the Kaba,[2] the
Sacred House, a maintenance for the people,[3] and the
sacred month and the offerings and the victims with
garlands; this is that you may know that God knows
whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth,
and that God is the Knower of all things. 98 Know
that God is severe in requiting (evil), and that God is
Forgiving, Merciful. 99 Nothing is (incumbent) on the
Apostle but to deliver (the message), and God knows
what you do openly and what you hide. 100 Say: The
bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance
of the bad may please thee; so be careful of (your duty
to) God, O men of understanding, that you may be
successful.

SECTION 14.—**Directions for Muslims**

101 O you who believe! do not put questions about
things which if declared to you may trouble you, and if
you question about them when the Quran is being revealed,
they shall be declared to you; God pardons this, and
God is Forgiving, Forbearing.[4] 102 A people before
you indeed asked such questions, and then became dis-

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[1] By the *game of the sea* is meant all water game, while the *ta'ám* (lit. *food*) of the sea means, *what is found, the sea or river having thrown it* (*on dry land*), or *what is left by the water having receded from it*.

[2] *Ka'bah*, from *Ka'aba*, meaning *it swelled* or *became prominent*, is so called because of its *prominence*, or it is a prophetical name showing that it shall forever have eminence in the world. It is also called *bait-ul-harám*, or *the Sacred House*, and among the Arabs it was known as the *bait-ulláh*, or *the house of God*. The building proper is 55 feet by 50 feet, but the whole courtyard in which it stands measures 530 feet by 500 feet.

[3] This is a prophetic announcement that the Kaba shall forever remain a support or stay for men, where pilgrims shall forever flock and shall take animals for sacrifice. The reference to this prophecy is elucidated in the concluding words: "This is that you may know that God knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth"; that is, the fulfilment of this prophecy in all future ages shall be a sign of the great knowledge of God, who pronounced it at a time when the Kaba was hardly known beyond the environs of Arabia.

[4] As Islam discouraged rigorous practices, such as monastic life, it also prohibited questions relating to details on many points which would require this or that practice to be made obligatory, and much was left to individual will or the circumstances of the time and the place.

believers on account of them.[1] 103 God has not ordained (the making of) a *bahírah* or a *sáibah* or a *wasílah* or a *hámí,* but those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against God and most of them do not understand.[2] 104 And when it is said to them, Come to what God has revealed and to the Apostle, they say: That on which We found our fathers is sufficient for us. What! even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way. 105 O you who believe! take care of your souls; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way; to God is your return, of all (of you), so He will inform you of what you did. 106 O you who believe! call to witness between you when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you,[3] if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you; the two (witnesses) you should detain after the prayer; then if you doubt (them), they shall both swear by God, (saying): We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative, and

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[1] The history of previous nations shows that the statement is generally true.

[2] The liberation of certain animals in honour of idols was a practice among the Arabs, and as Islam uprooted every vestige of idolatry, this practice is condemned here. *Bahírah* (from *bahara*, meaning *he cut* or *slit*) means *a she-camel having her ear slit.*

Sáibah (from *sába*, which means *it ran of itself*) signifies any beast left to pasture without attention.

Wasílah (from *wasala*, i.e. *he connected* or *joined*) means a *she-goat* which brought forth twins, a male and a female; when the male was brought forth alone it was slaughtered to the idols, the female alone being kept; but in the case of the male and the female being born twins, the male was considered to be joined to the female, and was not therefore sacrificed to the gods.

Hámí (from *hamá-hu*, i.e. *he prohibited* or *interdicted it* or *protected* or *guarded it*) means *a stallion-camel that has prohibited* or *interdicted his back* (to be used for bearing a rider or any burden).

[3] The following story is related in connection with this verse. Two brothers, both Christians, Tamim Dari and Adi, were entrusted by their dying Muslim companion Budail, in Syria, with certain property to be made over to his relatives on their return to Medina. The two brothers, however, stole a cup of silver, making over the remaining property; the relatives found a complete list disclosing the existence of the stolen cup of silver as being part of the original property, and thus the evidence of the Christian brothers was shown to be false.

This story abundantly proves that so late as the revelation of this chapter, which was revealed towards the close of the Holy Prophet's life, Muslim and Christian relations, notwithstanding differences of religion, were still friendly. It further demonstrates that the evidence of the followers of an alien religion is admissible according to the Holy Quran

we will not hide the testimony of God, for then we should be among the sinners. 107 Then if it becomes known that they both have been guilty of a sin, two others shall stand up in their place from among those who have a claim against them, the two nearest in kin, so they two should swear by God: Our testimony is truer than their testimony, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then surely we should be of the unjust. 108 This is more proper in order that they should give testimony truly or fear that other oaths may be given after their oaths; and be careful of (your duty to) God, and hear; and God does not guide the transgressing people.

SECTION 15.—Christian Love of World

109 On the day when God will assemble the apostles, then say: How were you accepted? They will say: We have no knowledge: Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.[1] 110 When God will say: O Jesus, son of Mary! remember My favour on thee and on thy mother, when I strengthened thee with the holy spirit; thou didst speak to the people in the cradle and when of old age, and when I taught thee the book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when thou didst determine out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then thou didst breathe into it and it became a bird by My permission, and thou didst heal the blind and the leprous by My permission, and when thou didst bring forth the dead by My permission;[2] and when I withheld the children of Israel from thee when thou didst come to them with clear arguments, but those who disbelieved among them said: This is nothing but clear enchantment. 111 And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My apostle, they said: We believe and bear witness that we submit (ourselves). 112 When the disciples said: O Jesus, son of Mary! will thy Lord consent to send down to us food from heaven? He said:

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[1] The question is, Did those to whom you were sent accept your message and remain true to it, or was it otherwise? The answer of the prophets is that only God knew how their message was received, because they could not say how far the accepters of the message remained true to it after their death.

[2] See 3:45, 48

Be careful of (your duty to) God if you are believers.
113 They said: We desire that we should eat of it and
that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know
that thou hast indeed spoken the truth to us and that
we may be of the witnesses to it. 114 Jesus, the son of
Mary, said: O God, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us means of subsistence, and Thou art
the best of the providers.[1] 115 God said: I will send
it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise any one among the nations.

SECTION 16.—False Christian Doctrines

116 And when God said: O Jesus, son of Mary! didst thou say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides God,[2] he said: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say); if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind; Thou art the great Knower of the unseen
things: 117 I did not say to them aught save what
Thou didst enjoin me with, That serve God, my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art

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[1] This passage seems to refer to the well-known prayer for *daily bread*, which Jesus appears to have included in the famous Lord's prayer on account of the earthly inclinations of his disciples. The food of earth has no doubt been granted in abundance to the Christians, but this has deprived them of the heavenly food. Compare the Muslim's prayer in the opening chapter, which craves not for bread but for the right path. The form of the prayer, that it should be an *ever-recurring happiness*, shows clearly that the prayer was not for a table laden with provision, as is generally supposed. As to its being sent from heaven, see 15:21 where everything that is provided to man is spoken of as being sent down from heaven.

[2] In the catechism of the Roman Church the following doctrines are to be found: "That she is truly the mother of God, and the second Eve, by whose means we have received blessing and life; that she is the mother of Pity and very specially our advocate; that her images are of the utmost utility." And there were certain women in Thrace, Scythia, and Arabia who were in the habit of worshipping the virgin as a goddess, the offer of a cake being one of the features of their worship

witness of all things:[1] 118 If Thou shouldst chastise them, they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. 119 God will say: This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones; they shall have gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them for ever; God is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with God; this is the mighty achievement. 120 God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and He has power over all things.

CHAPTER 6

AL-AN'ÂM: THE CATTLE

(*Mecca—20 sections; 166 verses*)

THE name of this chapter is taken from the mention of *cattle* in connection with certain superstitions and idolatrous practices of the Arabs, the abolition of which was needed to establish the doctrine of Divine Unity in all its purity. The object of Islam was not simply to preach Unity, but to make it the basis of a Muslim's practical life, and so to uproot all idolatrous practices.

The last chapter deals towards its close with the Christian doctrine of the deification of Jesus, and hence this chapter is introduced to deal at length with the doctrine of Divine Unity and its ultimate triumph, not only over idolatry, but over all kinds of polytheism. It may be added that though Divine Unity, the establishment of which is the chief object of the Quran, is frequently discussed in the previous chapters, its discussion at length is only taken up here after the details of the Law have been given.

The connection of the various sections, or the internal arrangement of the chapter, is too clear to need much discussion. Opening with a forcible declaration of the ultimate triumph of Divine Unity, and referring to the greatness of His mercy in the second section, the doctrine of Unity being always combined with the doctrine of the unique mercy of the Divine Being, it refers in the third to the polytheists' own evidence against their polytheism, which they, no doubt, often produce in this very life. The rejection of this great truth of Divine Unity and its consequences are then stated in the fourth and the fifth sections, mentioning incidentally the reward of believers in the sixth section. In the two succeeding sections the Divine judgment is declared to be imminent. The ninth mentions the arguments with which Abraham, that great

[1] This verse is a conclusive proof that Jesus died a natural death, because here he says that so long as he was among his followers he was a witness of their condition, and he did not find them holding a belief in his Divinity. The logical conclusion of this statement is that the false doctrine of his Divinity was introduced into the Christian faith *after his death*, after "*Thou didst cause me to die.*"

Patriarch, who may be said to be the father of monotheism, and who is undoubtedly the father of two of the biggest monotheistic peoples in the world, convinced his countrymen of the futility of the worship of any object other than God. The tenth section mentions seventeen other prophets who preached the Unity of the Divine Being.

The eleventh section draws attention to the truth of the Divine revelation of the Quran, which was now the bearer of that noble message of Divine Unity to mankind, and the next speaks of the ultimate triumph of that message. The thirteenth section states that this triumph would be brought about by a gradual progress, and the fourteenth refers to the polytheists' opposition. The plans adopted by the chief opponents are then hinted at in the fifteenth, and their failure prophesied in the sixteenth section. The next two refer to the polytheists' self-imposed but superstitious restrictions against the use of the flesh of certain animals, and their vain excuses for not abjuring their idolatrous practices. The guiding rules of life are then briefly stated in the nineteenth section, while the chapter is closed by drawing attention to the great goal before the faithful, viz. the making of Divine Unity the basis of the practical life of man.

The whole of this chapter is said to have been revealed in one portion. Its revelation belongs to the Meccan period, probably to the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Mecca.

SECTION 1.—Triumph of Unity

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 All praise is due to God, who created the heavens
and the earth and made the darkness and the light;[1]
yet those who disbelieve set up equals with their Lord.
2 He it is who created you from clay, then He decreed
a term; and there is a term named with Him;[2] still
you dispute. 3 And He is God in the heavens and in the
earth; He knows your secret (thoughts) and your open
(words), and He knows what you earn. 4 And there does
not come to them any communication of the communica-

[1] The words that God is the Maker of the darkness and the light are directed against the dualistic doctrine of the Magian religion, which holds light and darkness to be two co-eternal principles. The religion of Islam is the purest monotheism, and thus it holds that the ultimate cause of all things is the Great Maker of the heavens and the earth. Pure monotheism holds out before man the bright hope that, as goodness is inherent in the Divine Being, it is also the goal to which the creation moves on; while dualism considers the prevalence of evil to be necessary.

[2] The first term is that of life and the second the resurrection. All men are here said to be created from clay, and this shows what creation from clay or dust signifies. The same significance must be attached to the creation of Adam from clay.

tions of their Lord but they turn aside from it.
5 They
have indeed rejected the truth when it came to them; so the news of what they mocked at will come to them.
6 Do they not consider how many a generation We have destroyed before them, whom We had established in the earth as We have not established you, and We sent the clouds pouring rain on them in abundance, and We made the rivers to flow beneath them, then We destroyed them on account of their sins and raised up after them another generation.
7 And if We had sent to thee a writing on a paper, and they had touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said: This is nothing but clear enchantment.
8 And they say: Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided and then they would not have been respited.[1]
9 And if We had made him an angel, We would have (still) made him a man, and (thus) We would have made them fall into the confusion into which they have (now) fallen.[2]
10 And certainly apostles before thee were mocked at, but that which they mocked at encompassed the scoffers among them.

SECTION 2.—Greatness of Divine Mercy

11 Say: Travel in the land, and see what was the end of the rejecters.
12 Say: To whom belongs what is in the heavens and the earth? Say, To God; He has ordained mercy on Himself;[3] He will certainly gather you on the resurrection day—there is no doubt about it. (As for) those who have lost their souls, they do not believe.
13 And to Him belongs whatever dwells in the night and the day; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.
14 Say: Shall I take a guardian besides God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds (others) and is

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[1] The coming of the angels is always spoken of in the Quran as being synonymous with the infliction of the punishment with which the opponents were threatened; see v 159.

[2] The meaning is that if an angel were made an apostle to mankind, he would doubtless appear in the form of man, inasmuch as the human eye cannot see angels and because only a human being could serve as a model for man, and they would have fallen into the same confusion.

[3] The words *He has ordained mercy on Himself* imply that mercy is in fact His very nature.

not (Himself) fed. Say: I am commanded to be the
first who submits himself, and thou shouldst not be of
the polytheists. 15 Say: Surely I fear, if I disobey
my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day. 16 He
from whom it is averted on that day, God indeed has
shown mercy to him; and this is a manifest achievement.
17 And if God touch thee with affliction, there is none
to take it off but He; and if He visit thee with good, He
has power over all things. 18 And He is the Supreme,
above His servants; and He is the Wise, the Aware.
19 Say: What thing is the weightiest in testimony?
Say: God is witness between you and me; and this
Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn
you and whomsoever it reaches. Do you really bear
witness that there are other gods with God? Say: I
do not bear witness. Say: He is only one God, and I
am clear of that which you set up (with Him). 20 Those
whom We have given the Book recognize him as they
recognize their sons; (and) those who have lost their
souls do not believe.

SECTION 3.—**Polytheists' Testimony**

21 And who is more unjust then he who forges a lie
against God or (he who) gives the lie to His communica-
tions; surely the unjust will not be successful. 22 And
on the day when We shall gather them all together, then
shall We say to those who set up gods (with God): Where
are your associates whom you asserted? 23 Then their
excuse would be nothing but that they would say: By
God, our Lord, we were not polytheists. 24 See how
they lie against their own souls, and that which they
forged passes away from them. 25 And of them is he
who hearkens to thee, and We have cast veils over their
hearts lest they understand it and a heaviness into their
ears; and even if they see every sign they will not believe
in it; [1] so much so that when they come to thee, they only
dispute with thee; those who disbelieve say: This is

[1] This and what follows shows that veils were cast over their hearts because they would not believe even if they saw all the signs; they visited the Prophet, not for the purpose of listening to and pondering over what he said; but to dispute with him. The *casting of the veils* is ascribed to God exactly in the same sense as the adding to their disease in 2 : 10.

naught but the stories of the ancients. 26 And they prohibit (others) from it and go far away from it, and they only bring perdition upon their own souls while they do not perceive. 27 And couldst thou see when they are made to stand before the fire, then they shall say: Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers. 28 Nay, what they concealed before has become manifest to them; and if they were sent back, they would go back to that which they are forbidden, and they are surely liars.[1] 29 And they say: There is nothing but our life of this world, and we shall not be raised. 30 And couldst thou see when they are made to stand before their Lord, He will say: Is not this the truth? They will say: Yea! by our Lord. He will say: Taste then the chastisement because you disbelieved.

SECTION 4.—Rejection of the Truth

31 They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of God; until when the hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they shall say: O our grief for our neglecting it! And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear. 32 And this world's life is naught but a play and an idle sport;[2] and the abode of the hereafter is certainly better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then understand? 33 We know indeed that what they say grieves thee, but they do not call thee a liar, but the unjust deny the communications of God.[3] 34 And apostles before thee were certainly rejected, but they were patient on being rejected and persecuted until Our help came to them; and there

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[1] The evil consequences of their deeds were hidden in this life, but they will become manifest in the life after death. And since, if they were sent back, the evil consequences of evil deeds would again be hidden from the physical eye, they would revert to evil deeds.

[2] I.e. if the meeting of God is not taken to be the ultimate object; see last verse.

[3] The Prophet was known among them as *Al-Amin*, i.e. *the faithful* or *the truthful one*; and he was so highly reputed for his truthfulness because he was never guilty of having uttered a lie in his life. It was after he received the Divine revelation that he was called a *liar*, and hence it was really a denial of the Divine revelation of which they were guilty and not any denial regarding the truthfulness of the Prophet himself.

is none to change the words of God ;[1] and there has come
to thee some information about the messengers. 35 And
if their turning away is hard on thee, then if thou canst
seek an opening (to go down) into the earth or a ladder
(to ascend up) to heaven so that thou shouldst bring them
a sign[2]—and if God had pleased He would have gathered
them all on guidance, therefore be not of the ignorant.
36 Only those accept who listen ; and (as to) the dead,
God will raise them, then to Him they shall be returned.[3]
37 And they say : Why has not a sign been sent down to
him from his Lord ? Say : God is able to send down a
sign, but most of them do not know.[4] 38 And there is
no animal that walks upon the earth nor a bird that flies
with its two wings but (they are) genera like yourselves ;
We have not neglected anything in the book ; then to
their Lord shall they be gathered.[5] 39 And those who
reject Our communications are deaf and dumb, in utter
darkness ; whom God pleases He leaves in error, and whom
He pleases He puts on the right way. 40 Say : Tell me
if the chastisement of God should overtake you or the
hour should come upon you,[6] will you call (on others)
besides God, if you are truthful ? 41 Nay, Him you
will call upon, so He will clear away that for which you
pray if He pleases, and you will forget what you set up
(with Him).

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[1] The context shows clearly that by the *words of God* here are meant *the prophecies* promising assistance to His apostles. As help came to the apostles before the Holy Prophet, so would help come to him, and this was a prophecy which none could change.

[2] By the *bringing of a sign* is meant a sign that should bring all to guidance, as is clearly indicated by what follows.

[3] Even the spiritually dead, upon whom warnings and admonitions are wasted, and who do not listen to the voice of the Apostle, will be raised to life by the powerful hand of God.

[4] See v. 35. And God did send the very sign demanded, as we find the Arabs submitting to the Holy Prophet almost in a body after the conquest of Mecca, a reference to which is contained in 110 : 2.

[5] Other creatures are all provided for by God as men are, so far as physical needs are concerned. And they obey the laws of nature ; therefore, man must also obey the Divine laws. But man's nature aspires after something higher, and it is to satisfy that spiritual craving that prophets are sent. This verse, moreover, points as it were to two classes of men —those who, like beasts, are wholly bound to the earth and cannot rise, and those who rise like birds, soaring upward to the higher spiritual regions. It should be noted that the words *to their Lord shall they be gathered* refer to men and not to animals or birds, as the personal pronoun in *rabbi-him* shows. Resurrection is only for human beings.

[6] The *hour* here clearly signifies the hour of their doom.

SECTION 5.—Consequences of Rejection

42 And We sent (apostles) to nations before thee, then
We seized them with distress and affliction in order that
they might humble themselves. 43 Yet why did they
not humble themselves when Our punishment came to
them? And their hearts hardened and the devil made
what they did fair-seeming to them. 44 But when they
neglected that with which they had been admonished,
We opened for them the doors of all things, until when
they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them
suddenly; then lo! they were in utter despair. 45 So
the roots of the unjust people were cut off; and all praise
is due to God, the Lord of the worlds. 46 Say: Have
you considered that if God takes away your hearing and
your sight and sets a seal on your hearts, who is the god
besides God that can bring them to you? See how We
repeat the arguments, yet they turn away. 47 Say: Have
you considered if the chastisement of God should overtake
you suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed but the
unjust people? 48 And We send not messengers but
as announcers of good news and givers of warning, then
whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no
fear, nor shall they grieve. 49 And those who reject
Our communications—chastisement shall afflict them
because they transgressed. 50 Say: I do not say to
you, I have with me the treasures of God, nor do I know
the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel;[1]
I do not follow aught save that which is revealed to me.
Say: Are the blind and the seeing one alike? Do you
not then reflect?

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[1] What is meant by the verse is that as a man Muhammad was like other men, i.e. he did not know the unseen, etc., but as a prophet he knew and followed everything revealed to him by God. The unique greatness and nobleness of the Prophet lie in the fact that he never tried to put himself before people as superhuman. Many were the prophecies of the Quran fulfilled in his own lifetime, yet he continued to say, "Nor do I know the unseen." Islam triumphed, yet he never said, "I have the treasures of God." Every prophecy fulfilled, every success gained, he attributed to the all-powerful, all-knowing God. It was truth to which he invited, not the treasures of this world. He did not say: *follow me, I will make you sit on thrones*, though he actually made his followers the masters of vast empires.

SECTION 6.—Believers' Reward

51 And warn with it those who fear that they shall
be gathered to their Lord—there is no guardian for them,
nor any intercessor besides Him—that they may guard
(against evil). 52 And do not drive away those who call
upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, they
desire only His favour; neither art thou answerable for
any reckoning of theirs, nor are they answerable for any
reckoning of thine, so that thou shouldst drive them away
and thus be of the unjust.[1] 53 And thus do We try
some of them by others so that they say: Are these they
upon whom God has conferred benefit from among us?
Does not God best know the grateful? 54 And when
those who believe in Our communications come to thee,
say: Peace be on you, your Lord has ordained mercy
on Himself, (so) that if any one of you does evil in ignorance,
then turns after that and acts aright, He is Forgiving,
Merciful. 55 And thus do We make distinct the com-
munications and so that the way of the guilty may become
clear.

SECTION 7.—Divine Judgment

56 Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call
upon besides God. Say: I do not follow your low desires,
for then indeed I should have gone astray and I should
not be of those who go aright. 57 Say: I have manifest
proof from my Lord and you call it a lie; I have not with
me that which you would hasten; the judgment is only
God's; He relates the truth and He is the best of deciders.
58 Say: If that which you desire to hasten were with
me, the matter would have been decided between you and
me; and God best knows the unjust. 59 And with Him
are the treasures of the unseen—none knows them but
He; and He knows what is in the land and the sea; and
there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the

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[1] This verse was revealed when some leading Quraish expressed their willingness to accept the Prophet if the poorer Muslims were not allowed to remain in his company at the time. The poor and the rich are here brought to the same level; they are all men, they have equal claims to learn and practise the truth. Nay, those who had accepted the truth had a prior claim on the Prophet's attention. Truth is equally accessible to all.

darkness of the earth, nor anything green or dry but (it is all) in a clear book.[1] 60 And He it is who takes your souls at night (in sleep), and He knows what you acquire in the day, then He raises you up therein that an appointed term may be fulfilled; then to Him is your return, so He will inform you of what you did.

SECTION 8.—**Divine Judgment**

61 And He is the Supreme, above His servants, and He sends keepers over you;[2] until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss. 62 Then are they sent back to God, their Master, the True one; now surely His is the judgment and He is swiftest in taking account. 63 Say: Who is it that delivers you from the dangers of the land and the sea (when) you call upon Him (openly) humiliating yourselves and in secret: If He delivers us from this, we should certainly be of the grateful ones. 64 Say: God delivers you from them and from every distress, but again you set up gods (with Him). 65 Say: He has the power that He should send on you a chastisement from above you or from beneath your feet, or that He should throw you into confusion, (making you) of different parties, and make some of you taste the fighting of others. See how We repeat the communications that they may understand. 66 And thy people call it a lie and it is the very truth. Say: I am not placed in charge of you.[3] 67 For every prophecy is a term, and you will come to know (it).[4] 68 And when thou seest those who enter into false discourses about Our communications, withdraw from them until they enter into some other discourse;[5] and if the

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[1] Everything takes place according to a law known to God, and the clear book is the great law of cause and effect.

[2] I.e. the angels who guard the deeds of men.

[3] Or, *I am not a disposer of your affairs*, the significance in both cases being that the threatened punishment is not in the hands of the Prophet; it is God who requites men.

[4] The prophecy of the vanquishment of the powerful opponents of Islam is declared with even greater emphasis than in the earlier stage of the Prophet's mission, notwithstanding the apparent triumph of opposition which had succeeded in scattering the few men who had been converted to Islam.

[5] I.e. the company of those who mock should be avoided. See 4:140 which contains a reference to this.

devil cause thee to forget, then do not sit after recollection
with the unjust people. 69 And nought of the reckoning
of their (deeds) shall be against those who guard (against
evil), but (theirs is) only to remind, haply they may guard.
70 And leave those who have taken their religion for a
play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has
deceived, and remind (them) thereby lest a soul should
be given up to destruction for what it has earned ; it
shall not have besides God any guardian or an intercessor,
and if it should seek to give every compensation, it shall
not be accepted from it ; these are they who shall be
given up to destruction for what they earned ; they shall
have a drink of boiling water and a painful chastisement
because they disbelieved.

SECTION 9.—**Abraham**

71 Say : Shall we call on that besides God, which does
not benefit us nor harm us, and shall we be turned back
on our heels after God has guided us, like him whom the
devils have made to fall down perplexed in the earth ? [1]
He has companions who call him to the right way, (saying),
Come to us. Say : The guidance of God, that is the (true)
guidance, and we are commanded that we should submit
to the Lord of the worlds : 72 And that you should keep
up prayer and be careful of (your duty to) Him ; and He
it is to Whom you shall be gathered. 73 And He it is
Who has created the heavens and the earth with truth ;
and on the day He says, Be, it is. 74 His word is the
truth, and His is the kingdom on the day when the trumpet
shall be blown ; [2] the Knower of the unseen and the seen ;
and He is the Wise, the Aware. 75 And when Abraham
said to his sire, Azar : [3] Dost thou take idols for gods ?

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[1] If the faithful go back to idolatry, it would be like the falling of one who had attained to a great height into the depths of error and superstition.

[2] The trumpet is blown to gather men ; and here it stands for the gathering together of men on the day of resurrection. But the word *súr* meaning trumpet is also a plural of *súrat* meaning *form*, and therefore the words may also carry the significance *when forms are breathed into*.

[3] Whether Azar was the father of Abraham, or his grandfather or uncle, is a much disputed point. The word *ab* means *a father* as well as *an ancestor* and in 2 : 133 it is also applied to *an uncle*. The Arab genealogists are agreed that Abraham's father's name was *Tarah*, which

I see thee and thy people in manifest error. 76 And thus
did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and
the earth and that he might be of those who are sure.[1]
77 So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star.
Said he: Is this my Lord? [2] And when it set, he said:
I do not love the setting ones. 78 Then when he saw
the moon rising, he said: Is this my Lord? When it set,
he said: If my Lord had not guided me, I should be of
the erring people. 79 Then when he saw the sun rising,
he said: Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? And
when it set, he said: O my people! I am clear of what
you set up (with God): 80 I have turned myself, being
upright, wholly to Him who originated the heavens and
the earth, and I am not of the polytheists. 81 And his
people disputed with him. He said: Do you dispute
with me respecting God? And He has guided me indeed;
and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with
Him, unless my Lord pleases; my Lord comprehends all
things in His knowledge; will you not then mind? 82 And
how should I fear what you have set up (with Him) while
you do not fear that you have set up with God that for
which He has not sent down to you any authority; which
then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know?

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is the same as *Terah*, the name given to Abraham's father in Genesis, and Zurqani also gives *Tarah* as Abraham's father's name. But Terah appears as Athar in Eusebius, and the Ar. Azar quite corresponds with the latter, there being many examples in which a name transported into another language asssumes quite a different form. But the Quran does not apparently recognize Azar as the father of Abraham, for it speaks of the latter (Abraham's *wálid*) in 14 : 41 as a believer, while the sire (Ar. *ab*) is elsewhere spoken of as having stuck to idolatry till his death. This point throws much light on what the Quran means by the *ab* of Abraham, and hence I prefer *sire* as the significance of the word.

[1] Showing Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth signifies granting him an insight into the Divine laws of nature working in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, insight into which had convinced him that God was the real controller of the Universe and Supreme above all, while the sun, the moon, the stars and other heavenly bodies which the Sabeans worshipped were only His creation and subject to His laws.

[2] The words *házá rabbi* do not contain Abraham's conviction because, as stated in the previous verse, he was a believer in the Unity of God. The words are either uttered by way of surprise as referring to his people's belief, who are then made to realize their error by showing that what they call a god disappears at times, and therefore does not deserve to be worshipped—these people were not only idolaters, but also worshippers of the heavenly bodies; or the phrase may be interrogatory, *alif*, the letter of interrogation, being omitted, and interrogation expresses disapproval.

83 Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with
iniquity, these are they who shall have security and they
go aright.

SECTION 10.—Other Prophets

84 And this was Our argument which We gave to
Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whom
We please; for thy Lord is Wise, Knowing. 85 And
We gave to him Isaac and Jacob; each did We guide,
and Noah did We guide before, and of his descendants,
David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and
Aaron; and thus do We reward those who do good (to
others): 86 And Zacharias and John and Jesus and
Elias; every one was of the good: 87 And Ishmael
and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and every one We
made to excel (in) the worlds:[1] 88 And from among
their fathers and their descendants and their brethren,
and We chose them and guided them into the right way.
89 This is God's guidance; He guides thereby whom He
pleases of His servants; and if they set up others (with
Him), that which they did shall go for nothing. 90 These
are they to whom We gave the book and the judgment and
the prophecy;[2] therefore if these disbelieve in it We have
already entrusted with it a people who are not disbelievers
in it. 91 These are they whom God guided, therefore follow
their guidance.[3] Say: I do not ask you for any reward
for it; it is nothing but a reminder to the nations.

SECTION 11.—Revelation of Quran

92 And they do not show to God the measure of regard
due to Him when they say: God has not revealed anything

[1] Eighteen prophets are named here; that they are not mentioned in chronological order is not a matter for objection. See the next chapter, where the histories of several great prophets are mentioned in exact chronological order. There are some peculiar aspects of life regarding which the prophets referred to here are mentioned in different groups, and this is the reason why the concluding words of each of the three verses speaking of the three groups individually differ.

[2] To each prophet was given *a book* with which to guide mankind; *judgment*, so that he might decide disputes by his own authority; and the *gift of prophecy*.

[3] The Prophet is told to follow the guidance of all the earlier prophets; for his message was intended for all the nations to whom previous prophets had separately come. Hence the Holy Quran is called a reminder in the concluding words, showing that it was meant for all the nations, to whom it was in fact a reminder of what they had received before.

to a mortal.[1] Say: Who revealed the book which Moses brought, a light and a guidance to men, which you make into scattered writings, showing (part of) it while you conceal much? And you were taught what you did not know, (neither) you nor your fathers. Say: God; then leave them sporting in their vain discourses. 93 And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, verifying that which is before it, and that thou mayest warn the metropolis and those around her;[2] and those who believe in the hereafter believe in it, and they attend to their prayer constantly. 94 And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against God, or says: It has been revealed to me, while nothing has been revealed to him: and he who says: I can reveal the like of what God has revealed? And if thou hadst seen when the unjust shall be in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands: Give up your souls. This day shall you be recompensed with an ignominious chastisement because you spoke against God other than the truth and (because) you showed pride against His communications. 95 And now you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were God's associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is lost to you.

SECTION 12.—**Triumph of Truth**

96 God causes the grain and the stone to germinate; He brings forth the living from the dead and He is the bringer forth of the dead from the living; that is God! how are you then turned away?[3] 97 He causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning; this is an arrangement

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[1] By *a mortal* here is meant the Prophet, and the reference is to the Jewish allegations against him.

[2] The *metropolis* stands for *the people of the metropolis. Umm-ul-Qurá* (lit. *the mother of the towns*) is the title by which Mecca is known because it was both the political and the spiritual centre of Arabia. *Those around her* includes not only the whole of Arabia but the whole world, because Mecca has geographically a central position in the world.

[3] The preaching of the Prophet is likened to the sowing of the seed which, though to all appearance it is lost in the earth, soon springs forth into a large tree.

of the Mighty, the Knowing. 98 And He it is Who has
made the stars for you that you might follow the right
way thereby in the darkness of the land and the sea ; truly
We have made plain the communications for a people who
know. 99 And He it is Who has brought you into being
from a single soul, then there is (for you) a resting-place
and a depository ;[1] We have made plain the communica-
tions for a people who understand. 100 And He it is
Who sends down water from the cloud, then We bring
forth with it buds of all (plants), then We bring forth from
it green (foliage), from which We produce grain piled up
(in the ear) ; and of the palm-tree, of the sheaths of it,
come forth clusters (of dates) within reach ; and gardens of
grapes and olives and pomegranates, alike and unlike ;
behold the fruit of it when it yields the fruit and the ripen-
ing of it ; indeed there are signs in this for a people who
believe. 101 And they make the jinn associates with
God, while He created them, and they falsely attribute
to Him sons and daughters without knowledge ; glory
be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they
ascribe (to Him).[2]

SECTION 13.—Gradual Progress

102 Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the
earth ! How could He have a son when He has no con-
sort, and He (Himself) created everything, and He is the
Knower of all things.[3] 103 That is God, your Lord,
there is no god but He ; the Creator of all things, therefore
serve Him, and He has charge of all things. 104 Vision
comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision ;
and He is the Knower of subtleties, the Aware.[4] 105 In-
deed there have come to you clear proofs from your Lord ;

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[1] The resting-place is *this life*, and the depository is *the grave*, so that the meaning is that some live and others die ; or the resting-place is *the final abode of bliss* and the depository *the temporary residence in this world.*

[2] The reference is either to the dualistic doctrine of the Magi, who thought that while God was the creator of good, the devil was the creator of evil, or to the Arab belief that the *jinn* had a hand in the transaction of their affairs, or in bringing them good fortune or ill luck. For the meaning of *jinn* see note on v. 129.

[3] This verse and those that follow describe the transcendental unity of the Divine Being. To attribute a son to Him is to acknowledge that He had a consort ; otherwise the word *son* will have to be taken simply as a metaphor.

[4] The physical eye of man cannot comprehend the Infinite.

whoever will therefore see, it is for (the good of) his own
soul; and whoever will be blind, it shall be against
himself; and I am not a keeper over you. 106 And
thus do We repeat the communications and that they may
say: Thou hast read; and that We may make it clear
to a people who know. 107 Follow what is revealed to
thee from thy Lord; there is no god but He; and with-
draw from those who set up gods (with God). 108 And if
God had pleased, they would not have set up others (with
Him), and We have not appointed thee a keeper over
them, and thou art not placed in charge of them. 109 And
do not abuse those whom they call upon besides God,
lest exceeding the limits they should abuse God out of
ignorance.[1] Thus have We made fair-seeming to every
people their deeds; then to their Lord shall be their
return, and He will inform them of what they did. 110 And
they swear by God with the strongest of their oaths, that
if a sign came to them they would certainly believe in it.
Say: Signs are only with God; and what should make
you know that when it comes they will not believe.[2]
111 And We will turn their hearts and their sights, even
as they did not believe in it the first time, and We will
leave them in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on.[3]

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[1] No other religion comes up to the religion of Islam in its tolerance of other religions. Here the Muslims are forbidden to abuse even the idols of other people, though their worship is condemned in the strongest terms. It may be added that the clearing of the Kaba of idols when Mecca fell into the hands of the Holy Prophet does not in any way contradict this verse, for to abolish the worship of idols and to abuse them are not the same.

[2] Some annotators have been at great pains to prove, from the words used in this verse, that the Holy Prophet could not show a sign. The attempt is rather awkward in the face of the words with which the verse ends: *And what should make you know that when it* (i.e. the sign which they demand) *comes they will not believe?* It is a misconception of the words *signs are only with God* which has led to the distortion of the plain words of the Holy Quran. The words do indeed mean that it does not rest with the Prophet himself to show signs, but they do not mean that signs cannot be shown or will not be shown. Signs being *with God* signifies, on the other hand, that God will show what signs He pleases and when He pleases. And the words *when it comes*, moreover, show that the unbelievers' demand was for a particular sign.

[3] This *turning of their hearts and sights* is God's *leaving them in their inordinacy*, as explained by the verse itself. And even this is due to their own action in rejecting the truth when it first came to them. When the truth is not accepted and an attitude of enmity is assumed towards it, the heart becomes estranged, and this growing estrangement is termed the turning away of the heart from it.

PART VIII

SECTION 14.—Polytheists' Opposition

112 And even if We had sent down to them the angels
and the dead had spoken to them and We had brought
together all things before them, they would not believe
unless God pleases, but most of them are ignorant.
113 And thus did We make enemies for every prophet,
the devils from among men and jinn, some of them sug-
gesting to others varnished falsehood to deceive (them),
and had thy Lord pleased, they would not have done it;
therefore leave them and that which they forge; 114 And
that the hearts of those who do not believe in the here-
after may incline to it and that they may be well pleased
with it and that they may earn what they are going to
earn (of evil). 115 Shall I then seek a judge other than
God? And He it is Who has revealed to you the Book
(which is) made plain; and those whom We have given
the Book know that it is revealed by thy Lord with truth,
therefore thou shouldst not be of the disputers. 116 And
the word of thy Lord has been accomplished truly and
justly; there is none who can change His words, and He
is the Hearing, the Knowing. 117 And if thou obey most
of those in the earth, they will lead thee astray from God's
way; they follow but conjecture and they only lie.
118 Surely thy Lord—He best knows who goes astray
from His way, and He best knows those who follow the
right course. 119 Therefore eat of that on which God's
name has been mentioned if you are believers in His com-
munications. 120 And what reason have you that you
should not eat of that on which God's name has been
mentioned, and He has already made plain to you what He
has forbidden to you—excepting what you are compelled
to; and many do surely lead (people) astray by their low
desires out of ignorance; surely thy Lord best knows
those who exceed the limits. 121 And abandon open and
secret sin; those who earn sin shall be recompensed with
what they earn. 122 And do not eat of that on which
God's name has not been mentioned, and that is surely a
transgression; and the devils do suggest to their friends
that they should contend with you; and if you obey
them, you shall surely be polytheists.

SECTION 15.—**The Chief Opponents**

123 Is he who was dead, then We raised him to life
and made for him a light by which he walks among the
people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter
darkness whence he cannot come forth ?[1] Thus what
they did was made fair-seeming to the unbelievers. 124 And
thus have We made in every town the great ones to be its
guilty ones that they may plan therein ; and they do
not plan but against their own souls, and they do not
perceive. 125 And when a communication comes to
them they say : We will not believe till we are given the
like of what God's apostles are given. God best knows
where He places His message. There shall befall those
who are guilty humiliation from God and severe chas-
tisement because of what they planned. 126 So (for)
whomsoever God intends that He should guide him aright,
He expands his breast for Islam, and (for) whomsoever
He intends that He should leave him in error, He makes
his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending
upwards ; thus does God lay uncleanness on those who
do not believe.[2] 127 And this is the path of thy Lord,
(a) right (path) ; indeed We have made the communica-
tions clear for a people who mind. 128 They shall have
the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their guardian
because of what they did. 129 And on the day when He
shall gather them all together : O assembly of jinn ! you
took away a great part of men. And their friends from
among the men shall say : Our Lord ! some of us profited
by others[3] and we have reached our appointed term

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[1] These words throw a flood of light on many of the verses which speak of the raising of the dead to life through the prophets and the apostles.

[2] They disbelieve first and reject the truth, and the uncleanness which straitens their breasts follows as a result of their disbelief. The concluding words of the verse make this clear, because the uncleanness is laid on those who do not believe.

[3] The word *jinn* is derived from *janna*, meaning *he covered* or *concealed*. The class of beings that goes under this name stands in the Holy Quran for the spirits of evil or the beings that invite man to do evil, as opposed to the angels, who invite him to do good, both being alike in being invisible to the human eye. But the word is also applied to great potentates or powerful leaders who, through their importance and detachment from the masses, do not mix freely with them, so they remain distant or " hidden from their eyes." In Arabic literature such a use was permitted. Tabrezi says *the Arabs liken a man who is sharp and clever in affairs to a jinni and a shaitán.* And the word may be used metaphorically as the word *shaitán*

which Thou didst appoint for us. He shall say: The
fire is your abode, to abide in it, except as God is pleased;[1]
for thy Lord is Wise, Knowing. 130 And thus do We
make some of the iniquitous to befriend others on account
of what they earned.

SECTION 16.—The Punishment

131 O assembly of jinn and men! did there not come
to you apostles from among you, relating to you My communications
and warning you of the meeting of this day
of yours? They shall say: We bear witness against
ourselves. And this world's life deceived them, and they
shall bear witness against their own souls that they were
disbelievers. 132 This is because thy Lord would not
destroy towns unjustly while their people were heedless.[2]
133 And all have degrees according to what they do;
and thy Lord is not heedless of what they do. 134 And
thy Lord is the Self-sufficient one, the Lord of mercy; if
He pleases, He may take you away, and make whom He
pleases successors after you, even as He raised you up
from the seed of another people. 135 What you are
threatened with must come to pass and you cannot escape
(it). 136 Say: O my people! act according to your
ability; I too am acting; so you will soon come to know,
for whom (of us) will be the (good) end of the abode;
surely the unjust shall not be successful. 137 And they
set apart a portion for God, out of what He has created
of tilth and cattle, and say: This is for God—so they
assert—and this for our associates; then what is for
their associates, it reaches not to God, and whatever is
(set apart) for God, it reaches to their associates; evil is

(devil) is used metaphorically in speaking of men; see 2:14, etc. Now if we read vv. 129–132, not the least doubt is left that by the *jinn* are here meant only the iniquitous leaders. For the *jinn* of v. 129 are spoken of as the iniquitous befriending each other in v. 130, while in v. 131, the men and the *jinn* are called one assembly (Ar. *ma'shar*, meaning *a class*) and in v. 132, they are the dwellers of cities which were destroyed on account of their sins. In fact v. 131 is conclusive because there *jinn and men* are told that apostles came to them from among them and the only apostles mentioned in the Holy Quran are apostles from among men.

[1] Though abiding in hell is spoken of on several occasions as continuing for ever (Ar. *abad*) yet the exception here is conclusive as showing that those in hell shall ultimately be taken out of it. See note on 11:107 for further explanation.

[2] I.e. while warning had not yet come to them.

that which they judge.[1] 138 And thus their associates have made fair-seeming to most of the polytheists the killing of their children, that they may cause them to perish and obscure for them their religion;[2] and if God had pleased, they would not have done it, therefore leave them and that which they forge. 139 And they say: These are cattle and tilth prohibited; none shall eat them except such as We please—so they assert—and cattle whose backs are forbidden, and cattle on which they would not mention God's name[3]—forging a lie against Him; He shall requite them for what they forged. 140 And they say: What is in the wombs of these cattle is specially for our males, and forbidden to our wives, and if it be still-born, then they are all partners in it; He will reward them for their (false) description; surely He is Wise, Knowing. 141 They are lost indeed who kill their children foolishly without knowledge, and forbid what God has given to them, forging a lie against God; they have indeed gone astray, and they are not the followers of the right course.

SECTION 17.—**Idolatrous Usages**

142 And He it is Who produces gardens (of vine), trellised and untrellised, and palms and seed-produce of which the fruits are of various sorts, and olives and pomegranates, like and unlike; eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay the due of it on the day of its reaping, and do not act extravagantly; for He does not love the

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[1] It was a custom among the Arab idolaters to set apart certain portions of the produce of their fields and their cattle, one portion for God and another portion for the idols. The portion for idols was always applied to their use, but the portion set apart for God, though ordinarily spent to feed the poor and the needy, was in certain cases, for instance, when the portion of the idols was somehow or other destroyed, diverted to the use of the idols, the portion for the idols being handed over to the priests.

[2] This refers to the practice of slaying or burying alive the female children, and also to the human sacrifices to idols. By introducing these superstitions and evil customs they were making confused and obscure the true religion—the religion of the service of the One God which was preached by Ishmael.

[3] That is, such as were sacrificed in the name of idols. All these along with what is said in the next two verses and vv. 144, 145, are denounced as being idolatrous practices. It was necessary not only to accept the doctrine of Unity in theory, but also to bring it into practice, giving up all those ancient institutions which were based on idolatry.

extravagant. 143 And of cattle (He created) beasts
of burden and those which are fit for slaughter only; eat
of what God has given you and do not follow the footsteps
of the devil; for he is your open enemy: 144 Eight in
pairs—two of sheep and two of goats. Say: Has He
forbidden the two males or the two females or that which
the wombs of the two females contain? Inform me
with knowledge if you are truthful: 145 And two of
camels and two of cows. Say: Has He forbidden the
two males or the two females or that which the wombs
of the two females contain? Or were you witnesses when
God enjoined you this? Who, then, is more unjust
than he who forges a lie against God that he should lead
astray men without knowledge? Surely God does not
guide the unjust people.

SECTION 18.—**Prohibited Foods**

146 Say: I do not find in that which has been revealed
to me anything forbidden for an eater to eat of except
that it be what has died of itself, or blood poured forth,
or flesh of swine—for that is unclean—or that which is a
transgression, other than (the name of) God having been
invoked on it; but whoever is driven to necessity, not
desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely thy Lord is
Forgiving, Merciful.[1] 147 And to those who were Jews
We made unlawful every animal having claws, and of
oxen and sheep We made unlawful to them the fat of
both, except such as was on their backs or the entrails
or what was mixed with bones; this was a punishment
We gave them on account of their rebellion, and We are
surely Truthful. 148 But if they give thee the lie, say:
Your Lord is the Lord of all-encompassing mercy; and

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[1] The reference in " I do not find in that which has been revealed to me " seems to be to 16:115, which is an earlier revelation. It also deserves to be noticed that for the prohibition made known here reasons are also given, the reason for the prohibition of what dies of itself and blood and swine's flesh being that these things are *unclean*, while the reason for the prohibition of animals on which other than God's name is invoked is different, viz. *fisq*, or a transgression of the Divine commandment, which requires all things to be avoided which are in any way associated with idolatry. The uncleanness in the case of the first three consists in their pernicious effect upon the intellectual, the physical, and the moral systems respectively, while the transgression in the case of the last affects the spiritual conditions.

His punishment cannot be averted from the guilty people.[1]
149 Those who are polytheists will say: If God had
pleased we would not have associated (aught with Him)
nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden (to ourselves)
anything; even so did those before them reject until
they tasted Our punishment. Say: Have you any know-
ledge with you so you should bring it forth to us? You
only follow a conjecture and you only tell lies. 150 Say:
God's is the conclusive argument; if He had pleased,
He would have guided you all.[2] 151 Say: Bring your
witnesses who should bear witness that God has forbidden
this; then if they bear witness, do not bear witness with
them; and follow not the low desires of those who reject
Our communications and of those who do not believe in
the hereafter, and they make (others) equal to their Lord.

SECTION 19.—Guiding Rules of Life

152 Say: Come! I will recite what your Lord has for-
bidden to you—(remember) that you do not associate any-
thing with Him and show kindness to your parents, and do
not slay your children for (fear of) poverty—We provide for
you and for them—and do not draw nigh to indecencies,
those of them which are apparent and those which are
concealed, and do not kill the soul which God has for-
bidden except for the requirements of justice; this He
has enjoined you with that you may understand. 153 And
do not approach the property of the orphan except in the
best manner until he attains his maturity; and give
full measure and weight with justice. We do not impose
on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability;
and when you speak, be just, though it be (against) a

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[1] The all-encompassing mercy of God is mentioned even in speaking of those who rejected the Holy Prophet, and the mention of punishment for the guilty is to show that the ultimate object in punishment is also *mercy*. Thus punishment is not an end in itself; it is a step which after all leads to mercy, which is for this very reason here called *all-encompassing* mercy.

[2] The previous verse records the statement of the unbelievers: "If God had pleased we would not have associated aught with Him." They mean to insinuate that it is God Who makes them walk in error. The answer given here is that God does not compel men to adopt either a right or a wrong course; if He had pleased to exercise a compulsion He would have compelled them all to walk in submission to Divine laws as He has made the whole creation. But to man is given the choice, while the way is pointed out to him.

relative, and fulfil God's covenant; this He has enjoined
you with that you may be mindful. 154 And (know) that
this is My path, the right one, therefore follow it, and follow
not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His
way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard
(against evil). 155 Again, We gave the book to Moses
to complete (Our blessings) on him who would do good,
and making plain all things [1] and a guidance and a mercy,
so that they should believe in the meeting of their Lord.

SECTION 20.—The Goal

156 And this is a book We have revealed, blessed;
therefore follow it and guard (against evil) that mercy
may be shown to you. 157 Lest you say that the book
was only revealed to two parties before us and We were
unaware of what they read; [2] 158 Or (lest) you should
say: If the book had been revealed to us, we would have
been better guided than they; so indeed there has come
to you clear proof from your Lord, and guidance and
mercy. Who then is more unjust than he who rejects
God's communications and turns away from them? We
will reward those who turn away from Our communica-
tions with an evil chastisement because they turned away.
159 They do not wait aught but that the angels should
come to them, or that thy Lord should come, or that
some of the signs of thy Lord should come.[3] On the
day when some of the signs of thy Lord shall come, its
faith shall not profit a soul which did not believe before,
or earn good through its faith. Say: Wait, we too
are waiting. 160 Those who divided their religion into
parts and became sects, thou hast no concern with
them; their affair is only with God, and He will inform
them of what they did. 161 Whoever brings a good
deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an

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[1] By *all things* are meant all those things needed for the guidance of the Israelites in that age.

[2] Because in Arabia there lived only the Jews and the Christians besides the idolaters, hence only two parties are spoken of.

[3] For a similar expression see 2 : 210. The coming of angels signifies the coming of the slighter punishment; the coming of God stands for the complete overthrow of their opposition; while the coming of some of the signs means the coming of death. The time to profit by faith is no more when death overtakes a man.

evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of
it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. 162 Say:
My Lord has guided me to the right path, (to) a most right
religion, the faith of Abraham, the upright one, and he was
not of the polytheists. 163 Say: My prayer and my
sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for God, the
Lord of the worlds:[1] 164 No associate has He; and
this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who
submit. 165 Say: What! shall I seek a lord other
than God? And He is the Lord of all things; and no
soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of burden
shall bear the burden of another; then to your Lord is
your return, then He will inform you of that in which
you differed. 166 And He it is Who has made you rulers
in the land and raised some of you above others by (various)
grades, that He might try you by what He has given you;
surely thy Lord is quick to requite (evil), and He is surely
the Forgiving, the Merciful.

CHAPTER 7

AL-A'RÂF: THE ELEVATED PLACES

(*Mecca—24 sections; 206 verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the mention of *Al-A'râf* or *the elevated places* on which stand the prophets of God and those righteous servants of God who walk perfectly in the ways of truth and goodness. This name points to the theme of this chapter which is the need and truth of Divine revelation.

The chapter opens with a statement of the truth of the Divine revelation as granted to the Holy Prophet. The second section shows that opposition to the Prophet is similar to the devil's opposition to the righteous servants of God, whose prototype is Adam; and the third section contains a warning to all men against the insinuations of the devil. The next four sections are devoted to general statements regarding the advent of prophets, the fate of those who reject and ill-treat them, and the ultimate triumph of the righteous. These are followed by four other sections containing illustrations of these general statements as drawn from the histories of five prophets, whose names, and the prominent incidents of whose lives, were known to the Arabs, viz. Noah, Hud, Salih,

[1] Such is the doctrine of Divine Unity in practice: *to live* for God, *to die* for God—God, the Lord of the worlds. These last words are only to show that *living* for God and *dying* for God signifies living in the service of humanity and dying in the cause of humanity, because God is the Lord (lit. the sustainer and nourisher) of the world.

Lot, and Shuaib—all these prophets, though belonging to different nations and different countries, being mentioned in the chronological order of their appearance. These histories are followed in the twelfth section by a warning to the opponents of the Holy Prophet.

The remaining half of the chapter, with the exception of the last three sections, is taken up entirely with the history of Moses, importance being attached to that history on account of the close resemblance of the Holy Prophet of Arabia to the great Israelite prophet, and on account of the clear prophecies of Moses regarding the appearance of a prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites, i.e. the Ishmaelites, or the Arab nation. This is the reason that towards the end of that history mention is specially made of the prophecies contained in the Torah and the Gospel.

The last three sections are again of a general nature, referring first to the impress of Divine Unity upon man's nature, thus adducing evidence of the truth of revelation, which also preaches Unity; then to the coming of the doom, and lastly stating that that doom shall not be averted by the help of the false gods and enjoining Muslims to seek the help of God to overcome opposition.

The connection of this chapter with the last becomes clear when the subject-matter of the two chapters is jointly considered. The last chapter deals chiefly with the doctrine of Divine Unity, while this deals with the truth of revelation, and as the two doctrines are closely interrelated, this chapter complements the last one. Internal as well as external evidence shows this chapter to have been revealed at about the same time as the last chapter. Hence the date of its revelation may be placed at a period just prior to the Flight.

SECTION 1.—The Prophet's Revelation

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower, the Truthful.[1] 2 A
book revealed to thee—so let there be no straitness in thy
breast on account of it[2]—that thou mayest warn thereby
and a reminder to the believers.[3] 3 Follow what has
been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow
guardians besides Him; how little do you mind. 4 And
how many a town that We destroyed; so Our punishment

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[1] Of the four letters *Alif, lám, mim,* and *sád,* the first three are the same as at the commencement of ch. 2, while *sád* stands for *sádiq,* meaning *truthful,* or for *afsal,* i.e. *the best Decider.*

[2] The parenthetical passage, *so let there be no straitness in thy breast on account of it,* is introduced to console the Prophet, who at this time encountered the greatest opposition and was surrounded on all sides by difficulties, and whose mission so far had made very little progress.

[3] The Quran is very often called *zikr* or *zikrá,* i.e. *a reminder,* because, being in consonance with human nature, it is a reminder of what is imprinted on human nature; or *zikrá* has here the meaning of *zikr,* i.e. an honour or eminence, as in 43 : 44.

came to it by night or while they slept at midday. 5 Yet
their cry, when Our punishment came to them, was nothing
but that they said: Surely we were unjust. 6 So We
will question those to whom (the apostles) were sent, and
We will question the apostles;[1] 7 Then We will relate
to them with knowledge, and We were not absent. 8 And
the measuring out on that day will be just; then as for
him whose measure (of good deeds) is heavy, these are
they who shall be successful.[2] 9 And as for him whose
measure (of good deeds) is light, these are they who have
made their souls suffer loss because they disbelieved in Our
communications. 10 And surely We have established
you in the earth and made in it means of livelihood for
you; little it is that you give thanks.

SECTION 2.—The Devil's Opposition

11 And certainly We created you, then We fashioned
you, then We said to the angels: Make obeisance to
Adam. So they did obeisance except Iblis; he was not
of those who did obeisance.[3] 12 He said: What hindered
thee so that thou didst not make obeisance when I com-
manded thee? He said: I am better than he; Thou
hast created me of fire, while him Thou hast created of
dust.[4] 13 He said: Then get forth from this (state), for

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[1] Those to whom apostles were sent shall be questioned as to how they treated the apostles, and the latter as to how they were received.

[2] According to Raghib *wazn* means *the knowing of the measure of a thing*. And he adds that the *allusion here is to justice in the reckoning of men*. Mujahid says *wazn* here means *qadá*, or *judging*. The *measuring out* or the *wazn* mentioned here does not signify a weighing with the balance. The word *mízán* occurs also in 55 : 7 : "And the heaven He raised high and He made the measure" and also in 57 : 25 : "Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments and sent down with them the book and the measure," and in both places it does not signify balance.

[3] Compare 2 : 30–39.

[4] The creation of man from dust is frequently referred to in the Holy Quran. Not only is Adam created from dust, but all men are spoken of as being similarly created. As a contrast to man's creation from dust, the devil claims to have been created from fire. The meaning may be that the preponderating element in the creation of man is earth, while in that of the devil it is fire. There seems to be a reference here to the nature of the temperaments of the two classes, men and devils. The Holy Quran says elsewhere: "Man is created of haste; now will I show to you My signs; therefore do not ask Me to hasten them on" (21 : 37). These words explain themselves. Man's creation of haste means that he is *hasty*. In like manner the devil's creation of fire may mean that he is made of a fiery temperament, while the perfect man is humble and meek, being

it does not befit thee to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, for thou art of the abject ones. 14 He said: Respite me until the day when they are raised up.[1] 15 He said: Thou art of the respited ones. 16 He said: As Thou hast judged me as erring, I will lie in wait for them in Thy straight path: 17 Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side, and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful. 18 He said: Get out of this (state), despised, driven away; whoever of them follows thee, I will fill hell with you all. 19 And (We said): O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the garden; and eat from where you desire, and do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust. 20 But the devil made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what had been hidden from them of their evil inclinations,[2] and he said: Your Lord has not forbidden you this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals. 21 And he swore to them both: Surely I am a sincere adviser to you. 22 Thus he caused them to fall by deceit; and when they tasted of the tree, their evil inclinations became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden;[3] and their Lord called out to them: Did I not forbid you both that tree and say to you that the devil is your open enemy? 23 They said: Our Lord! we have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers. 24 He said: Get forth, some of you the enemies of others, and there is

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created of dust, which stands for humility and meekness. Thus the description given here may stand for the prominent characteristics of the temperaments of the two classes of beings.

[1] The devil's grip continues only so long as man is not spiritually raised to life. The raising up here stands for the spiritual resurrection of man.

[2] The devil's suggestions always prompt the evil inclinations in man.

[3] The consciousness of having done something unworthy of one's self is the surest way to the attainment of perfection. The covering with the leaves of the garden is the desire to make up by human effort any fault that may have been committed. The clothing that guards against evil, which is spoken of in v. 26 as being *the best clothing*, explains the meaning of *covering* here. Divine revelation points out to man the true way, enabling him to *cover* himself or guard himself against evil. And, further, the statement in v. 27, *pulling off from them both their clothing that he might show them their evil inclinations*, shows that covering with the leaves of the garden is an allegorical statement.

for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.
25 He (also) said: Therein shall you live, and therein
shall you die, and from it shall you be raised.

SECTION 3.—The Devil's Insinuations

26 O children of Adam! We have sent down to you
clothing to cover your nakedness and for beauty; and
clothing that guards (against evil), that is the best.[1] This
is of the communications of God that they may be mindful.
27 O children of Adam! let not the devil cause you to
fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the
garden, pulling off from them both their clothing [2] that he
might show them their evil inclinations. He sees you, he
as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them. We
have made the devils to be the guardians of those who
do not believe. 28 And when they commit an indecency
they say: We found our fathers doing this, and God has
enjoined it on us. Say: God does not enjoin indecency;
do you say against God what you do not know? 29 Say:
My Lord has enjoined justice, and set upright your faces
at every time of prayer and call on Him, being sincere
to Him in obedience; as He brought you forth in the
beginning, so shall you also return. 30 A part has He
guided aright, and (as for another) part, perdition is justly
their due; [3] for they took the devils for guardians beside
God, and they think that they are followers of the right
way. 31 O children of Adam! attend to your embellish-

[1] Clothing at first simply served to cover shame; with further progress men sought to embellish therewith their persons; but there is yet a third kind of clothing, says the Quran, which is the best, and that is *libās ut taqwā*, or *the clothing of piety*, literally *the clothing that guards one against evil.* It indicates a further step in the progress of man, for virtue is an embellishment of the mind, and when man has seen the good of embellishing his person, he will soon be aware of the necessity of embellishing the mind.

[2] That the clothing for the body is not meant here is clear from the fact that all men are warned against a similar attack of the devil. As to the clothing of which Adam was divested, there remains no doubt when it is seen that the devil tries to divest every child of Adam of the same clothing. Mujahid says: It is the clothing that guards against evil, and by their *sauat* is meant *the evil that afflicted them on account of their disobedience.*

[3] Or, *error is justly their due.* The use of the word *haqqa* in this case is to show that *error* or *perdition* has become necessary as suited to the requirements of justice in their case: *see* Lane's Ar.-Eng. Lexicon. And the reason is there: Because they have taken the devils for their guardians.

ments at every time of prayer,[1] and eat and drink and be not extravagant; for He does not love the extravagant.

SECTION 4.—Divine Messengers

32 Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment of
God which He has brought forth for His servants and
the good provisions? Say: These are for the believers
in the life of this world, purely (theirs) on the resurrection
day;[2] thus do We make the communications clear for
a people who know. 33 Say: My Lord has only prohibited
indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as
those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without
justice, and that you associate with God that for which
He has not sent down any authority, and that you say
against God what you do not know. 34 And for every
nation there is a doom, so when their doom is come they
shall not remain behind the least while, nor shall they
go before. 35 O children of Adam! if there come to you
apostles from among you relating to you My communica-
tions, then whoever shall guard (against evil) and act
aright—they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.
36 And those who reject Our communications and turn
away from them haughtily—these are the inmates of the
fire, they shall abide in it. 37 Who is more unjust than
he who forges a lie against God or rejects His communica-
tions? (As for) these, their portion of the book shall
reach them,[3] until when Our messengers come to them
causing them to die, they shall say: Where is that
which you used to call upon besides God? They would
say: They are lost to us; and they shall bear witness
against themselves that they were unbelievers. 38 He

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[1] *Zinat* or *embellishment* is here generally understood to mean *apparel*, with reference to the practice of going naked round the Kaba, but the word itself has a wider significance. Rághib says: Embellishment is of three kinds, i.e. *spiritual*, such as knowledge and good beliefs; *bodily*, such as strength and tallness of stature; *extrinsic*, such as wealth and dignity. Hence we may regard both the spiritual and extrinsic embellishment to be meant here, the former indicating *virtue* and the latter *clothing*.

[2] The meaning is that in the life of this world the believer and the unbeliever equally profit by the good things, but in the life after death all good shall be exclusively for those who have accepted and acted on the right principles.

[3] That is, the punishment promised in the book shall overtake them; this is supported by the conclusion of the verse.

will say: Enter into fire among the nations that have passed away before you from among jinn and men; whenever a nation shall enter, it shall curse its sister, until when they have all come up with one another into it, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them:[1] Our Lord! these led us astray, therefore give them a double chastisement of the fire. He will say: Every one shall have double, but you do not know.[2] 39 And the foremost of them will say to the last of them: You have no preference over us, therefore taste the chastisement for what you earned.

SECTION 5.—Rejecters and Accepters

40 Those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily—the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle;[3] and thus do We reward the guilty. 41 They shall have a bed of the hell-fire, and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We reward the unjust. 42 And those who believe and do good—We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability—they are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide. 43 And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to God Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been that God had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth. And it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did. 44 And the dwellers of the garden will call out to the inmates of the fire: We have found what our Lord promised us to be true; have you too found what your Lord promised

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[1] By the last and the foremost are meant here the common people and the leaders, because though the words would bear both interpretations, i.e. the last and the foremost in time or the last and the foremost in position, the latter significance is corroborated by similar expressions in several other places, such as 2 : 166, 14 : 21, 34 : 31–33, 40 : 47, etc.

[2] The leaders for misleading others and the followers for blindly following others.

[3] That is, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor can they rise above the low earthly desires, soaring upward to the higher regions of spiritual life.

to be true? They will say: Yes. Then a crier will cry
out among them that the curse of God is on the unjust,
45 Who turn away from God's way and seek to make it
crooked, and they are disbelievers in the hereafter. 46 And
between the two there shall be a veil;[1] and on the elevated
places there shall be men who know all by their marks;[2]
and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden:
Peace be on you; they shall not have yet entered it,
though they hope.[3] 47 And when their eyes shall be
turned towards the inmates of the fire, they shall say:
Our Lord! place us not with the unjust people.

SECTION 6.—**Helplessness of Rejecters**

48 And the dwellers of the elevated places shall call
out to men whom they will recognize by their marks
saying: Of no avail were to you your amassings and your
behaving haughtily: 49 Are these they about whom you
swore that God will not bestow mercy on them? Enter
the garden: you shall have no fear, nor shall you grieve.
50 And the inmates of the fire shall call out to the dwellers
of the garden, saying: Pour on us some water or (give
us) of the subsistence that God has given you. They shall
say: God has prohibited them both to the unbelievers,
51 Who take their religion for an idle sport and a play,
and this world's life deceives them; so to-day We forsake
them, as they neglected the meeting of this day of theirs
and as they denied Our communications. 52 And cer-
tainly We have brought them a book which We have
made clear with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for
a people who believe. 53 Do they wait for aught but

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[1] The veil which here separates the wicked from the righteous and on account of which the former fail to see the bliss which the latter enjoy will assume a perceptible form in the next life.

[2] *A'ráf* is plural of *'arf*, meaning literally ***an elevated place***, and hence *Al-a'ráf* means ***the elevated places***. Evidently those who are in these elevated places—men who know the good and the bad from their marks—are the righteous servants of God, the prophets and their perfect followers. Compare 56:10, 11 where three classes of people are spoken of, viz. the foremost, the inmates of paradise and the inmates of hell. Instead of the foremost we have here those on elevated places. The idea that on *A'ráf* are those whose good and evil deeds are equal does not find any support from the Holy Quran.

[3] That is, the prospective dwellers of the garden shall not yet have made their entry into the garden of bliss.

its final sequel ?[1] On the day when its final sequel comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the apostles of our Lord brought the truth; are there for us then any intercessors so that they should intercede on our behalf? Or could we be sent back so that we should do (deeds) other than those which we did? Indeed they have ruined themselves, and that which they forged has gone away from them.

SECTION 7.—**Accepters shall prosper**

54 Your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He holds control on the throne;[2] He throws the veil of night over the day, which it pursues incessantly; and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command; surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is God, the Lord of the worlds. 55 Call on your Lord humbly and secretly; for He does not love those who exceed the limits. 56 And do not make mischief in the earth after its reformation, and call on Him fearing and hoping;[3] for the mercy of God is nigh to those who do good (to others). 57 And He it is Who sends forth the winds bearing good news before His mercy, until, when they bring up a laden cloud, We drive it to a dead land,

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[1] By *final sequel* is meant the *ultimate state*, or the threatened end.

[2] The phrase *istawá 'alal 'Arsh* is used in the Holy Quran here and on six other occasions, viz. in 10 : 3, 13 : 2, 20 : 5, 25 : 59, 32 : 4, and 57 : 4. A reference to these six places will show that it is invariably used after mentioning the creation of the heavens and the earth and in relation to the Divine control of His creation, and the law and the order to which the universe is made to submit by its great Author. The Holy Quran has, in fact, explained itself here as elsewhere. For instance, here we have first a statement describing God's creation of the heavens and the earth, and then this phrase, while the verse ends with a similar statement, *surely His is the creation and the command.* Hence it must convey the same idea as the word *command.* A reference to 10 : 3 shows that it stands for the regulating of affairs. Turning to the lexicons, we find that *'arsh* literally means *a thing constructed for shade* or *anything roofed.* According to Rághib *the court* or *sitting place of the king* is called *'arsh* on account of its eminence. And he adds: *And it is used to indicate might* or *power,* and *authority* and *dominion.* And again: "The *'arsh* of God is one of the things which mankind knows not in reality but only in name, and it is not as the imaginations of the vulgar hold it to be." In fact, both the words *'arsh* and *kursí* have been misunderstood as meaning resting-places for God. Bukhari has explained the latter to mean *knowledge,* and the true significance of the former is *power* or *control of the creation.*

[3] Because the fear of His displeasure ennobles the mind no less than the hope of His mercy.

then We send down water on it, then bring forth with it of fruits of all kinds; thus shall We bring forth the dead that you may be mindful.[1]
58 And as for the good land, its vegetation springs forth (abundantly) by the permission of its Lord, and (as for) that which is inferior, (its herbage) comes forth but scantily; thus do We repeat the communications for a people who give thanks.

SECTION 8.—Noah

59 We sent Noah to his people, so he said: O my people! serve God, you have no god other than Him; I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.[2]
60 The chiefs of his people said: We see thee in clear error.
61 He said: O my people! there is no error in me, but I am an apostle from the Lord of the worlds:
62 I deliver to you the messages of my Lord, and I offer you good advice, and I know from God what you do not know:
63 What! do you wonder that a reminder has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he might warn you and that you might guard (against evil), and that mercy may be shown to you?
64 But they called him a liar, so We delivered him and those with him in the ark, and We drowned those who rejected Our communications; surely they were a blind people.

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[1] The bringing forth of the spiritually dead to life through the revelation of the Quran is always likened to the bringing of the dead earth to life by rain. The wind bearing the good news was the movement towards Islam, which was daily becoming more and more powerful.

[2] Having warned the Quraish of the evil consequences of their opposition to the Holy Prophet, several illustrations are now given from ancient sacred history showing how those people were dealt with who refused to listen to the voice of the warners. It should be borne in mind in reading the histories of the prophets as given in the Holy Quran that the object of the Quran is not to narrate history as such, but to bring out certain characteristics of the histories of different nations, to mention incidents which contain prophetic allusion to the Holy Prophet's life, illustrating the general warnings made regarding the ultimate consequences attendant upon the rejection of truth. The Quran does not concern itself with the details of what messages a prophet delivered to his people and of how he was received; it simply contents itself with the broad facts that every prophet preached Divine Unity, every prophet laid stress on piety, every prophet was received with severe opposition, and that each of these messengers ultimately succeeded in establishing the truth. This, with slight variations, is the sum and substance of the histories of the prophets that are recorded in the Holy Quran. For other references to Noah, see 3 : 32, 6 : 85, 10 : 71–73, 11 : 25–48, 14 : 9, 17 : 3, 21 : 76–77, 23 : 23–29, 25 : 37, 26 : 105–122, 29 : 14–15, 37 : 75–82, 51 : 46, 53 : 52, 54 : 9–16, 57 : 26, 66 : 10, 69 : 11–12, 71 : 1–28.

SECTION 9.—Hud

65 And to Ad (We sent) their brother Hud.[1] He said: O my people! serve God, you have no god other than Him; will you not guard (against evil)? 66 The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: We see thee in folly, and we think thee to be of the liars. 67 He said: O my people! there is no folly in me, but I am an apostle of the Lord of the worlds: 68 I deliver to you the messages of my Lord and I am a faithful adviser to you: 69 What! do you wonder that a reminder has come to you from your Lord through a man from among you that he might warn you? And remember when He made you rulers after Noah's people and increased you in excellence in respect of make; therefore remember the benefits of God that you may prosper. 70 They said: Hast thou come to us that we may serve God alone and give up what our fathers used to serve? Bring to us what thou threatenest us with, if thou art of the truthful ones. 71 He said: Indeed uncleanness and wrath from your Lord have lighted upon you; what! do you dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have given? God has not sent any authority for them;[2] wait then, I too with you will be of those who wait. 72 So We delivered him and those with him by mercy from Us, and We cut off the roots of those who rejected Our communications and were not believers.

SECTION 10.—Salih and Lot

73 And to Samood (We sent) their brother Salih.[3] He said: O my people! serve God; you have no god other

[1] Ad was the grandson of Aram (mentioned in 89 : 7), who was a grandson of Noah, and the tribe of Ad here spoken of is called *the first Ad* (53 : 50), as distinguished from the tribe of Samood, which is called *the second Ad*. This tribe lived in the desert of Al-Ahqaf (46 : 21), which is marked on the maps of Arabia and extends from Oman to Hadramaut. For other references to Ad and Hud, see 11 : 50–60, 14 : 9, 25 : 38, 26 : 123–140, 29 : 38, 41 : 13–16, 46 : 21–26, 51 : 41–42, 53 : 50, 54 : 18–21, 69 : 4, 69 : 6–8, 89 : 6–8.

[2] This refers to their deities which were four in number; *Sáqiyah* (giving rain); *Háfizah* (preserving from dangers); *Ráziqah* (giving food); *Sálimah* (healing from sickness).

[3] Ad and Samood, though two nearly related tribes, were separated both as regards time and place. The tribe of Samood is known after a

than Him. Clear proof indeed has come to you from your
Lord ; this is God's she-camel, for you—a sign ; so leave
her alone to pasture on God's earth, and do not do her
any harm, otherwise a painful chastisement will overtake
you :[1] 74 And remember when He made you rulers after
Ad and settled you in the land—you make mansions on
its plains and hew out houses in the mountains—remember
therefore God's benefits and do not act corruptly in the
land, making mischief. 75 The chiefs of those who behaved
proudly from among his people said to those who were
considered weak, to those who believed from among them :
Do you know that Salih is sent by his Lord ? They said :
We are truly believers in what he has been sent with.
76 Those who were haughty said : We are deniers of what
you believe in. 77 So they slew the she-camel and re-
volted against their Lord's commandment, and they said :
O Salih ! bring us what thou didst threaten us with, if
thou art one of the apostles. 78 So the earthquake over-
took them, and they became motionless in their abode.[2]
79 Then he turned away from them and said : O my
people ! I did deliver to you the message of my Lord,
and I gave you good advice, but you do not love those
who give good advice. 80 And (We sent) Lot when
he said to his people : What ! do you commit an indecency

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grandson of Aram, the grandson of Noah. Historical traces of it are met with in Ptolemy. The tribe flourished more than two hundred years after Ad, and occupied the territory known as Al-Hijr or Al-Hajdr (15 : 80) and the plain known by the name of Wádi ul Qurá, which forms the southern boundary of Syria and the northern one of Arabia. For other references to Samood, see 11 : 61–68, 14 : 9, 15 : 80–84, 25 : 38, 26 : 141-159, 27 : 45–53, 29 : 38, 41 : 13–14, 41 : 17–18, 51 : 43–45, 53 : 51, 54 : 23–31, 69 : 4–5, 89 : 9, 91 : 11–15.

[1] Neither the Quran nor any reliable saying of the Holy Prophet lends any support to the numerous legends regarding the miraculous appearance and prodigious size of the she-camel. It was an ordinary she-camel which was given as a sign to a people. Their slaying of it was a sign that they had formed a plot to murder Salih himself ; see 27 : 49, which shows that they were going to attack and destroy him and his family by night.

[2] The punishment which overtook Samood is described under different names. Here it is called *rajfah*, which means *earthquake*. The description of their abodes in 27 : 52 as being *fallen down* also shows that they were destroyed by an earthquake. In 54 : 31 the same punishment is referred to as *saihah*, i.e. *a cry*, and it evidently refers to the rumbling noise which precedes an earthquake. In 51 : 44 and elsewhere it is spoken of as *sá'iqah*, which means any *destructive punishment*, carrying sometimes the same significance as *saihah*. In 69 : 5 Samood are said to have been destroyed by means of *tághiyah*, which means an *excessively severe punishment*. Both of these descriptions apply to an earthquake.

which any one in the world has not done before you?[1] 81 You do come to males in lust besides females; nay, you are an extravagant people. 82 And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: Turn them out of your town, for they are a people who seek to purify (themselves). 83 So We delivered him and his followers, except his wife; she was of those who remained behind. 84 And We rained upon them a rain;[2] consider then what was the end of the guilty.

SECTION 11.—Shuaib

85 And to Midian (We sent) their brother Shuaib. He said: O my people! serve God, you have no god other than Him; clear proof indeed has come to you from your Lord, therefore give full measure and weight and do not diminish to men their things,[3] and do not make mischief in the land after its reform; this is better for you if you are believers: 86 And do not lie in wait in every path, threatening and turning away from God's way him who

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[1] In the chronological order which this chapter keeps in view, Abraham should have been mentioned next, but his name is here omitted for two reasons: firstly, because only those prophets are mentioned whose enemies were destroyed before their eyes; and secondly, because Abraham's history has already been dealt with in the last chapter, to which this forms, as it were, a supplement. Hence, we come to Lot, Abraham's nephew. Lot is one of those prophets who have been maligned not only in Rabbinical literature but also in the Bible. It is clear that Lot is considered a righteous servant by Abraham (Gen. 18 : 23), and by saving Lot, God had shown that He, too, regarded Lot as a righteous man; but a little further on we are told that Lot was guilty of incestuous intercourse with his daughters, a fact so inconsistent with righteousness that it must be condemned as a manifest lie. As against this we have the testimony of 2 Pet. 2 : 7, 8 where Lot is spoken of as just and righteous, whose soul was vexed on account of the wickedness of the Sodomites. For other references to Lot, see 6 : 87, 11 : 77–83, 15 : 61–74, 21 : 74–75, 26 : 160–173, 27 : 54–58, 29 : 32–35, 37 : 133–136, 51 : 32–37, 53 : 53–54, 54 : 34–38, 68 : 10.

[2] The punishment which overtook the people of Lot is frequently called *matr* or *rain*, while in 11 : 82 and 15 : 74 *stones* are said to have been rained down upon them, and in 54 : 34 it is called a *hásib*, which primarily signifies a *thrower* or *pelter of stones*, but means *any punishment*. Its description as *saihah* in 15 : 73, combined with the above facts, shows that it was a volcanic eruption combined with an earthquake, because *saihah* signifies *a great noise such as precedes an earthquake*, and is used to denote an earthquake.

[3] The injunction *do not diminish to men their things* stands for not depriving or defrauding men of their rights, or not acting wrongfully towards men in respect of their things or dues. Shuaib is nearly contemporaneous with Moses, and hence he comes after Lot. For other references, see 11: 84–95, 15 : 78–79, 26 : 176-191, 29 : 36–37.

believes in Him and seeking to make it crooked; and
remember when you were few, then He multiplied you,
and consider what was the end of the mischief-makers:
87 And if there is a party of you who believe in that with
which I am sent, and another party who do not believe,
then wait patiently until God judges between us; and He
is the best of the judges.

PART IX

88 The chiefs of those who were proud from among his
people said: We will turn thee out, O Shuaib, and (also)
those who believe with thee, from our town, or you shall
come back to our faith. He said: What! though we
dislike (it): 89 Indeed we shall have forged a lie against
God if we go back to your religion after God has delivered
us from it, and it befits us not that we should go back to
it, except if God our Lord please; Our Lord comprehends
all things in His knowledge; in God do we trust. Our
Lord! decide between us and our people with truth; and
Thou art the best of deciders. 90 And the chiefs of those
who disbelieved from among his people said: If you
follow Shuaib, you shall surely be losers. 91 Then the
earthquake overtook them, so they became motionless
bodies in their abode, 92 Those who called Shuaib a liar
were as though they had never dwelt therein; those who
called Shuaib a liar, they were the losers. 93 So he
turned away from them and said: O my people! I did
deliver to you the messages of my Lord and I gave you
good advice; how shall I then be sorry for an unbelieving
people?

SECTION 12.—**Meccans warned**

94 And We did not send a prophet in a town but We
overtook its people with distress and affliction in order
that they might humble themselves. 95 Then We gave
them ease in place of distress until they increased and
said: Distress and happiness did indeed befall our fathers.
Then We took them by surprise while they did not per-
ceive. 96 And if the people of the towns had believed
and guarded (against evil), We would have opened up for
them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they

gave the lie (to Our signs), so We overtook them for what they had earned. 97 What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them by night while they sleep? 98 What! do the people of the towns feel secure from Our punishment coming to them in the morning while they play? 99 What! do they feel secure from God's plan? But none feels secure from God's plan except the people who shall perish.

SECTION 13.—Moses is called

100 Is it not clear to those who inherit the earth after its (former) residents that if We please We would afflict them on account of their sins and set a seal on their hearts so they would not hear.[1] 101 These towns—We relate to thee some of their stories, and their apostles came to them with clear arguments, but they would not believe in what they gave the lie to at first; thus does God set a seal over the hearts of the unbelievers. 102 And We did not find in most of them any (faithfulness to) covenant, and We found most of them to be transgressors. 103 Then We sent after them Moses with Our communications to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they disbelieved in them; consider then what was the end of the mischief-makers. 104 And Moses said: O Pharaoh! I am an apostle from the Lord of the worlds: 105 Worthy of not saying anything about God except the truth; I have come to you indeed with clear proof from your Lord, therefore send with me the children of Israel. 106 He said: If thou hast come with a sign, bring it, if thou art of the truthful ones. 107 So he threw his rod, then lo! it was a clear serpent, 108 And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white to the beholders.[2]

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[1] The setting of a seal upon the heart is here plainly stated to be the consequence of man's sins.

[2] 20 : 9–23 makes it clear that the first occasion on which these miracles were shown to Moses was that when he received the Divine message. It was in that peculiar state—which may be called a state of trance—in which the prophets of God receive Divine revelation that he was shown that his staff became a serpent and his hand became white. The miracles had therefore a meaning underlying them. Now the word *'asá* means a *staff* as well as a *community*, and turning the staff into the serpent no doubt carried the significance that the community of Moses, the Israelites, would prevail over their enemies; and *yad i baidá* which denotes a clear argument in allegorical language carried the significance that Moses would overpower Pharaoh in argument.

SECTION 14.—**Moses and the Enchanters**

109 The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: This is a
learned enchanter: 110 He intends to turn you out of
your land; what counsel do you then give? 111 They
said: Put him off and his brother, and send collectors
into the cities: 112 That they may bring to thee every
learned enchanter. 113 And the enchanters came to
Pharaoh (and) said: We must surely have a reward if we
prevail. 114 He said: Yes, and you shall also be of
those who are near (to me). 115 They said: O Moses!
wilt thou cast, or shall we be the first to cast? 116 He
said: Do you cast. So when they cast, they deceived
the people's eyes and frightened them, and they produced
a mighty enchantment. 117 And We revealed to Moses,
saying, Cast thy rod; then lo! it devoured their lies.[1]
118 So the truth was established, and what they did
became null. 119 And they were vanquished there, and
they went back abased. 120 And the enchanters were
thrown down, prostrating (themselves). 121 They said:
We believe in the Lord of the worlds: 122 The Lord of
Moses and Aaron.[2] 123 Pharaoh said: Do you believe
in Him before I have given you permission? Surely this
is a plot which you have secretly devised in the city, that
you may turn out of it its people, so you shall know:
124 I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite
sides, then will I crucify you all together. 125 They said:
Surely to our Lord shall we go back: 126 And thou
dost not revenge thyself on us except because we have be-
lieved in the communications of our Lord when they came to
us; our Lord! pour out upon us patience and cause us to
die in submission.

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[1] Compare Exod. 7 : 12 : "For they cast every man his rod and they became serpents : but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."

[2] The Bible does not speak of the magicians believing in the Divine mission of Moses; but we have mention of this in Rabbinical literature, according to which some Egyptians accompanied Moses when he departed from Egypt, which is corroborated by the Bible narrative: "And a mixed multitude also went up with them" (Exod. 12 : 38). "For the Egyptians, when the time fixed for Moses' descent from the mountain had expired, came in a body, forty thousand of them, accompanied by two Egyptian magicians, Yanos and Yambros, the same who imitated Moses in producing the signs and the plagues in Egypt" (*Jewish Ency.*). These two magicians are also mentioned in 2 Tim. 3 : 8, which is a further corroboration of the truth of the statement made in the Quran and of the incompleteness of the Bible narrative.

SECTION 15.—Moses is persecuted

127 And the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: Dost thou leave Moses and his people to make mischief in the land and to forsake thee and thy gods? He said: We will slay their sons and spare their women, and we are masters over them. 128 Moses said to his people: Ask help from God and be patient: surely the land is God's; He causes such of His servants to inherit it as He pleases,[1] and the (good) end is for the righteous. 129 They said: We have been persecuted before thou camest to us and since thou hast come to us. He said: It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act.

SECTION 16.—Signs of Moses

130 And We overtook Pharaoh's people with droughts and diminution of fruits that they may be mindful. 131 But when good befell them they said, This is due to us; and when evil afflicted them, they attributed it to the ill-luck of Moses and those with him; surely their evil fortune is only from God, but most of them do not know. 132 And they said: Whatever sign thou mayest bring to us to charm us with it—we will not believe in thee. 133 Therefore We sent upon them widespread death, and the locusts and the lice and the frogs and the blood, clear signs;[2] but they behaved haughtily and they were a guilty people. 134 And when the plague fell upon them, they said: O Moses! pray for us to thy

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[1] The reference is to the Promised Land whither Moses was taking them.

[2] The Bible mentions the following signs: (1) turning of the water into blood; (2) frogs; (3) lice; (4) flies; (5) plague upon beasts and men; (6) hail; (7) locusts; (8) darkness; (9) plague on the first born. Of these the Quran mentions the first, second, third, and seventh in clear words; the fourth is included in the third; the fifth and the ninth are mentioned together as *túfán* or *widespread death*; the hail is not mentioned, but the destruction of fruits which was brought about by it is mentioned in v. 130; while instead of the *darkness* we have the *drought* in that verse, which seems to have been the actual affliction, and of which darkness may have been a result either metaphorically or actually, because of hurricanes and storms darkening the land, as is usually the case in time of drought. The two signs of v. 130, with the five mentioned here, are the seven signs which, with the two signs of the rod and the white hand, make up the nine signs of 17:101 and 27:12.

Lord as He has promised with thee; if thou removest
the plague from us, we will believe in thee and we will
send away with thee the children of Israel. 135 But when
We removed the plague from them till a term which they
should attain, lo! they broke (the promise).[1] 136 There-
fore We inflicted retribution on them and drowned them
in the sea because they rejected Our signs and were heedless
of them. 137 And We made the people who were deemed
weak to inherit the eastern lands and the western ones
which We had blessed;[2] and the good word of thy Lord
was fulfilled in the children of Israel because they bore up
(sufferings) patiently; and We utterly destroyed what
Pharaoh and his people had wrought and what they built.
138 And We made the children of Israel to pass the sea;
then they came upon a people who clung to the worship
of their idols. They said: O Moses! make for us a god
as they have (their) gods. He said: Surely you are an
ignorant people. 139 (As to) these, what they are after
shall be brought to naught and that which they do is
vain. 140 He said: What! shall I seek for you a deity
other than God while He has made you excel (all) created
things?[3] 141 And when We delivered you from Pharaoh's
people who subjected you to severe torment, killing your
sons and sparing your women, and in this there was a great
trial from your Lord.

SECTION 17.—**Moses is given the Law**

142 And We appointed with Moses a time of thirty
nights and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed
time of his Lord was complete forty nights. And Moses
said to his brother Aaron: Take my place among my
people, and act well and do not follow the way of the
mischief-makers. 143 And when Moses came at Our
appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My

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[1] Compare Exod. 8–11.

[2] The land that was *blessed* is none other than the Holy Land, for which a Divine promise was given to Abraham. The words that follow show that there is a reference here to some promise given already. It is contained in Gen. 17 : 8.

[3] Moses' argument against idolatry is the one to which the Holy Quran repeatedly calls attention, viz. that man, being as it were the lord of creation under God, and excelling the whole of creation, should not take objects lower than himself as his gods.

Lord! show me (Thyself), so that I may look upon Thee. He said: Thou canst not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then wilt thou see Me; but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He made it crumble and Moses fell down in swoon; and when he recovered, he said: Glory be to Thee, I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers.[1] 144 He said: O Moses! I have chosen thee above the people with My messages and with My words, therefore take hold of what I give to thee and be of the grateful ones. 145 And We ordained for him in the tablets admonition of every kind and clear explanation of all things; so take hold of them with firmness and enjoin thy people to take hold of what is best thereof; I will show you the abode of the transgressors.[2] 146 I will turn away from My communications those who are unjustly proud in the earth; and if they see every sign they will not believe in it; and if they see the way of rectitude they do not take it for a way, and if they see the way of error, they take it for a way; this is because they rejected Our communications and were heedless of them. 147 And those who reject Our communications and the meeting of the hereafter, their deeds are null. Shall they be rewarded except for what they have done?

SECTION 18.—**Moses and Calf-worship**

148 And Moses' people made of their ornaments a calf after him, a (mere) body, which had a hollow sound. What! could they not see that it did not speak to them nor guide them in the way? They took it (for worship) and they were unjust. 149 And when they repented and saw that they had gone astray, they said: If our Lord show not mercy to us and forgive us, we shall certainly be of the lost ones. 150 And when Moses returned to his people, wrathful (and) in violent grief, he said: Evil is it that you have done after me; did you make haste with

[1] The words addressed to Moses do not negative the seeing of the Divine Being in the life after death. All that they negative is the seeing of the Divine Being with the physical eye. Moses' request seems to have been based on the elders' demand spoken of in 2 : 55. The crumbling of the mountain is the same as the rumbling or earthquake of 2 : 55.

[2] The meaning is that a time will come to the Israelites when they will become transgressors.

regard to the commandment of your Lord?[1] And he
threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head,
dragging him towards him. He said: Son of my mother!
the people reckoned me weak and had well nigh slain
me, therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over me
and count me not among the unjust people.[2] 151 He
said: My Lord! forgive me and my brother and cause
us to enter into Thy mercy, and Thou art the most Merciful
of the merciful ones.

SECTION 19.—**Moses prophesies Muhammad's Advent**

152 Those who took the calf (for a god)—displeasure
from their Lord and disgrace in this world's life shall over-
take them, and thus do We recompense the devisers of
lies. 153 And those who do evil deeds, then repent
after that and believe, thy Lord after that is surely For-
giving, Merciful. 154 And when Moses' anger calmed
down he took up the tablets,[3] and in the writing thereof
was guidance and mercy for those who fear for the sake
of their Lord. 155 And Moses chose out of his people
seventy men for Our appointment;[4] and when the earth-
quake overtook them, he said: My Lord! if Thou hadst
pleased, Thou wouldst have destroyed them before and
myself (too); wilt Thou destroy us for what the fools
among us have done? It is naught but Thy trial; with
it Thou leavest in error whom Thou pleasest, and guidest
whom Thou pleasest; Thou art our guardian; therefore
forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best
of the forgivers: 156 And ordain for us good in this world's
life and in the hereafter, for we turn to Thee. He said:

[1] The *amr* or the *commandment* of the Lord stands for the punishment which is due to transgression.

[2] Aaron's excuse and Moses' acceptance of it show clearly that Aaron was quite innocent, having had a share neither in making the calf nor in worshipping it. The Bible account which makes Aaron guilty of these heinous crimes must be rejected as untrue. That forgiveness in the next verse was not sought for any fault in connection with calf-worship is clear from the fact that Moses joins himself with Aaron in the prayer given in that verse. Forgiveness here, as frequently elsewhere in the Holy Quran, is equivalent to the Divine protection which every man should seek against the frailties and shortcomings of human nature.

[3] According to Exod. 32:19 Moses "brake them beneath the mountain" in his anger. The Quran differs from this narrative. It does not state that the tablets were broken.

[4] See Exod. 24:1. But the Quran does not mention Moses' second visit.

(As for) My chastisement, I will afflict with it whom I please, and My mercy encompasses all things;[1] so I will ordain it (specially) for those who guard (against evil) and pay the poor-rate, and those who believe in Our communications:
157 Those who follow the Apostle-Prophet, the *Ummi*,[2] whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel,[3] (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so those who believe in him and honour him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that shall prosper.

SECTION 20.—**Israelite Transgressions**

158 Say, O people! I am the Apostle of God to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the

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[1] No attribute of the Divine Being receives such prominence in the Holy Quran as the attribute of mercy. Evil there is in the world, and the evil-doers must receive their due, but mark the contrast: *And my mercy encompasses all things.* The truth is that even chastisement is a phase of Divine mercy, because it seeks not to punish, but to correct the evil-doer. Divine mercy is great indeed, but it is specially ordained for those who guard against evil and who believe in the Divine communications, the followers of the Holy Prophet in particular, as the concluding words of this verse read in conjunction with the next verse show.

[2] *Ummi* means *one who neither writes nor reads a writing.* Hence the Arabs are called an *ummi* people, and the *ummi* prophet is either *the prophet of the ummi people* (i.e. the *Arabs*) *because he was like them* (i.e. *did not know reading and writing*) or *he was so called because he himself did not know reading and writing.* But according to some, the Prophet is called *ummi* because he came from the *Umm-ul-Qurá*, i.e. Mecca, which is the Metropolis of Arabia. Thus the *ummi* prophet conveys any one of the following three significances, viz. (1) one who knows not reading or writing; (2) one from among the Arabs; and (3) one coming from Mecca.

As for the fact that the Holy Prophet was unable to read or write before revelation came to him, there can be no two opinions. On this point the Quran is conclusive: "And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand" (29 : 48).

[3] There are many prophecies regarding the advent of the Holy Prophet both in the Old and the New Testaments. The Torah and the Gospel are specially mentioned here because Moses and Jesus were respectively the first and the last of the Israelite dispensation. Deut. 18 : 15–18 speaks very clearly of the rising of a prophet (who shall be the like of Moses) from among the brethren of the Israelites, i.e. the Ishmaelites or the Arabs, while Deut. 33 : 2 speaks of the shining forth of the manifestation of the Lord, i.e. his coming in full glory "from Mount Paran." The Gospel is full of the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet: Matt. 13 : 31, Matt. 21 : 33–44, Mark 12 : 1–11, Luke 20 : 9–18, where the Lord of the vineyard comes after the son (i.e. Jesus) is maltreated, John 1 : 22, John 14 : 16, John 14 : 26 all contain such prophecies.

earth,[1] there is no god but He; He brings to life and causes to die, therefore believe in God and His Apostle, the *Ummi* Prophet who believes in God and His words, and follow him so that you may walk in the right way. 159 And of Moses' people was a party who guided (people) with the truth, and thereby did they do justice. 160 And We divided them into twelve tribes, as nations; and We revealed to Moses when his people asked him for water, Strike the rock with thy staff; so outflowed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking-place; and We made the clouds to give shade over them and We sent to them manna and quails:[2] Eat of the good things We have given you. And they did not do Us any harm, but they did injustice to their own souls. 161 And when it was said to them: Reside in this town and eat from it wherever you wish, and say, Put down from us our heavy burdens; and enter the gate making obeisance, We will forgive you your wrongs; We will give more to those who do good (to others). 162 But those who were unjust among them changed it for a saying other than that which had been spoken to them, so We sent upon them a punishment from heaven because they were unjust.[3]

SECTION 21.—Israelites punished

163 And ask them about the town which stood by the sea; when they exceeded the limits of the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, appearing on the surface of the water, and on the day on which they did not keep the Sabbath they did not come to them; thus did We try them because they transgressed.[4] 164 And when a party of them said: Why do you admonish a people whom God would destroy or whom He would chastise with a severe chastisement? They

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[1] We are told here that the Divine kingdom which is really one, shall have but one law, so that all men should again be one. In vain would any one search the pages of any other sacred book to discover a message of this nature by any other prophet in the world. In fact, every prophet was sent to one people, his mission being limited to the reformation and unification of one nation: but the Holy Prophet Muhammad came to unite all nations into one and to blot out all limitations of nationality and colour.

[2] See 2 : 60 and 2 : 57.

[3] See 2 : 58, 59.

[4] The city referred to here is generally recognized as being Ela, which was situated on the Red Sea. The incident alluded to is mentioned as an instance of the Jewish violation of the Sabbath.

said: To be free from blame before your Lord, and that haply they may guard (against evil). 165 So when they neglected what they had been reminded of, We delivered those who forbade evil and We overtook those who were unjust with an evil chastisement because they transgressed. 166 Therefore when they revoltingly persisted in what they had been forbidden, We said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated.[1] 167 And when thy Lord announced that He would send against them to the day of resurrection those who would subject them to severe torment; for thy Lord is quick to requite (evil), and surely He is Forgiving, Merciful. 168 And We cut them up on the earth into parties, (some) of them being righteous and (others) of them falling short of that, and We tried them with blessings and misfortunes that they might turn. 169 Then there came after them an evil posterity who inherited the Book, taking only the frail good of this low life and saying: It will be forgiven us. And if the like good came to them, they would take it (too).[2] Was not a promise taken from them in the Book that they would not speak anything about God but the truth, and they have read what is in it; and the abode of the hereafter is better for those who guard (against evil); do you not then understand? 170 And those who hold fast by the Book and keep up prayer—surely We do not waste the reward of the right-doers. 171 And when We shook the mountain over them as if it were a covering overhead, and they thought that it was going to fall down upon them:[3] Take hold of what We have given you with firmness, and be mindful of what is in it, so that you may guard (against evil).

SECTION 22.—Evidence of Human Nature

172 And when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made

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[1] See note on 2 : 65.

[2] First they commit a crime for the frail good of this life, saying that they will be forgiven, then persist in their evil course, and when a similar occasion arises, they again return to the old crime.

[3] The words simply relate the experience of the elders of Israel when they stood at the foot of the mountain which rose above them. There was a severe earthquake, which is referred to in v. 155, causing them to think that the mountain would fall down upon them.

them bear witness against their own souls: Am I not
your Lord? They said: Yes! we bear witness.[1] Lest
you should say on the day of resurrection, We were
heedless of this; 173 Or you should say: Only our
fathers set up gods (with God) before, and we were
an offspring after them; wilt Thou destroy us for
what the vain-doers did? 174 And thus do We make
clear the communications, and that haply they might
return. 175 And recite to them the news of him whom We
give Our communications, but he withdraws himself
from them, and the devil overtakes him, so he is of those
who perish.[2] 176 And if We had pleased, We would have
exalted him thereby; but he clings to the earth[3] and
follows his low desire, so his parable is as the parable of
the dog: if thou attack him he lolls out his tongue, and
if thou leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the
parable of the people who reject Our communications;
therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect.
177 Evil is the likeness of the people who reject Our com-
munications and who are unjust to their own souls.
178 Whomsoever God guides, he is the one who follows
the right way; and whomsoever He leaves in error, these
are the losers. 179 And certainly We have created for
hell many of the jinn and the men; they have hearts
with which they do not understand, and they have
eyes with which they do not see; and they have ears
with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay,
they are in worse error; these are the heedless ones.[4]

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[1] There is a report to the effect that the promise referred to was taken from all the descendants of Adam when he was first created. But a very large number of commentators have discredited this, because the verse does not mention the bringing forth of descendants from Adam, but from the children of Adam, and this seems clearly to refer to every human being as he comes into existence. The evidence is, therefore, that which human nature itself affords to the truth of Divine Revelation. It is, in fact, the same evidence which is elsewhere spoken of as being afforded by human nature, as in "the nature made by God in which He has made men" (30 : 30).

[2] This is simply a parable; see concluding words of the next verse. The verse does not speak of Balaam or any other person in particular; it speaks generally of every one to whom guidance is brought, but he turns aside from it.

[3] *Earth* here stands for all that is earthly and mean.

[4] The concluding words explain what goes before. Many men and jinn are created for hell; but they are none other than the heedless ones who do not care for what is said. They have been given hearts, but they

180 And God's are the most excellent names, therefore
call on Him thereby,[1] and leave alone those who violate
the sanctity of His names;[2] they shall be recompensed
for what they did. 181 And of those whom We have
created are a people who guide with the truth and thereby
do they do justice.

SECTION 23.—The Doom

182 And those who reject Our communications, We
draw them near (to destruction) by degrees from whence
they know not. 183 And I grant them respite; surely
My scheme is effective. 184 Do they not reflect that
their companion has not unsoundness in mind? He is
only a plain warner. 185 Do they not consider the
kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever
things God has created, and that maybe their doom shall
have drawn nigh? What announcement would they
then believe in after this? 186 Whomsoever God leaves
in error, there is no guide for him; and He leaves them
alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on. 187 They
ask thee about the hour,[3] when will be its coming?
Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none
but He shall manifest it at its time; it will be momentous
in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you
but of a sudden. They ask thee as if thou wert solicitous
about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with God, but

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do not use them to understand the truth; they have been given eyes, but they do not employ them to see the truth; they have been given ears, but they turn a deaf ear to truth. This has been stated to show that God has not created them differently from others, but they themselves do not use the faculties which God has granted them.

[1] By *calling on Him thereby* is not meant that these names are to be repeated on a rosary; this practice was never adopted by the Holy Prophet. All that is meant is that man should always keep the Divine attributes before his mind, endeavouring to possess those attributes.

[2] Raghib says *violation of the sanctity of His names is of two kinds*: firstly, *giving Him an improper or inaccurate attribute*; and secondly, *to interpret His attributes in a manner which does not befit Him*. Razi mentions three kinds: (1) giving the holy names of God to other beings; (2) giving God names which do not befit Him; (3) calling on God by names of which the meaning is unknown. Polytheism of every kind is, therefore, a violation of the sanctity of the Divine names.

[3] That is, the hour with which they are threatened as being the hour of their doom. The word *sá'at* or the *hour* is used in the Holy Quran to indicate both the doom of a people or the time of their overthrow, and the final destruction of man on earth.

most people do not know. 188 Say: I do not control any benefit or harm for my own soul except as God please; and had I known the unseen I would have had much of good and no evil would have touched me; I am nothing but a warner and the giver of good news to a people who believe.[1]

SECTION 24.—All Opposition fails

189 He it is who created you from a single being, and of the same (kind) did He make his mate, that he might incline to her; so when he covers her, she bears a light burden, and moves about with it; but when it grows heavy, they both call upon God, their Lord: If Thou givest us a good one, we shall be of the grateful ones.[2]
190 But when He gives them a good one, they set up with Him associates in what He has given them; but high is God above what they associate (with Him).
191 What! they associate (with Him) that which does not create any thing, while they are themselves created!
192 And they have no power to give them help, nor can they help themselves. 193 And if you invite them to guidance, they will not follow you; it is the same to you whether you invite them or you are silent.[3] 194 Those whom you call on besides God are in a state of subjugation like yourselves; therefore call on them, then let them answer you if you are truthful. 195 Have they feet with

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[1] The simplicity and nobility of this statement as indicating the mission of a prophet is unsurpassed. He gives glad news of triumph to those who believe, warns the evil-doers of the evil consequences of their deeds in this life as well as in the next, but he denies himself the possession of the Divine powers. The Arabs were a superstitious people, and if the Holy Prophet had so desired he could have claimed the possession of great supernatural powers. But truth stated in the simplest words is the essence of his message.

[2] The story that this verse refers to Adam and Eve and their naming their son *Abdul Haris*, *Haris* being a name of the devil, has been rejected by all reliable commentators. The words of the verse are too general to be transported into the story of Adam and Eve. It describes the condition of man in general, and refers to the evidence of his nature, for when in distress he always turns to God, but when in ease he goes after other gods or the low desires of his own soul. The verse clearly blames the idolatrous Arabs for associating others with God, as is shown by the use of the plural number in v. 190 and the verse that follows.

[3] The polytheists are addressed here. If they invite their false gods, they will not come to their help.

which they walk, or have they hands with which they hold, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear? Say: Call your associates, then make a struggle (to prevail) against me and give me no respite.[1] 196 My guardian is God Who revealed the Book, and He befriends the good. 197 And those whom you call upon besides Him are not able to help you, nor can they help themselves, 198 And if you invite them to guidance, they do not hear; and thou seest them looking towards thee, yet they do not see. 199 Take to forgiveness and enjoin good and turn aside from the ignorant. 200 And if a false imputation from the devil afflict thee,[2] seek refuge in God; surely He is Hearing, Knowing. 201 (As for) those who guard (against evil), when a visitation from the devil afflicts them, they become mindful, then lo! they see.[3] 202 And their brethren[4] increase them in error, and they cease not. 203 And when thou bringest them not a sign, they say: Wherefore dost thou not demand it? Say: I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord; these are clear proofs from your Lord and a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe. 204 And when the Quran is recited, listen to it and remain silent that mercy may be shown to you. 205 And remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud, in the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless ones. 206 Those who are with thy Lord are not too proud to serve Him, and they declare His glory and prostrate themselves before Him.[5]

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[1] This challenge in such clear and forcible words was given at a time when the Holy Prophet was quite helpless while his opponents controlled all power.

[2] The primary significance of *nazaghahú* is *he censured him and charged him with a vice and spoke evil of him.* The devil in this case, as frequently in the Holy Quran, stands for the devilish enemies who spread all kinds of false reports concerning the Holy Prophet, against which he is told to seek refuge in God. This significance is quite in consonance with what is said in the previous verse, where the Prophet is enjoined to take to forgiveness and turn aside from the ignorant.

[3] Being endowed with insight, they see their way out of the affliction, or the meaning is that anger does not blind them.

[4] The brethren of the devils are the devil's human associates.

[5] The recital of this verse is followed by an actual prostration, so that the physical state of the body may be in perfect agreement with the spiritual condition of the mind.

CHAPTER 8

AL-ANFÂL: THE ACCESSIONS

(*Medina*—10 *sections ;* 75 *verses*)

As this chapter chiefly confines itself to the first battle of the Muslims, the question of what is acquired from the enemy in war is settled here, and hence this chapter goes under the name of *Al-Anfál*, which is improperly translated as meaning *Spoils*, but which really signifies *accessions* or *additions*.

The chapter opens with certain statements necessary to a preparation for the battle, while the second section deals with the battle itself—i.e. the battle of Badr. The third section points out the way to success, the essence of which is obedience and faithfulness to the Holy Prophet, which the companions unwaveringly exhibited in this battle, under the most trying circumstances. The fourth section refers to the successful issue of the war. After pointing out the plans of the opponents against the Prophet, it states that the Muslims will be made the guardians of the Sacred Mosque at Mecca, and the unbelievers will be completely overthrown and defeated. The fifth refers to the great value of the success in the battle of Badr as a sign of the Prophet's truth. The sixth indicates that success did not depend on numbers and weapons, but on firmness and union ; while the seventh proceeds to show that the battle had completely undermined the enemy's strength, referring in conclusion to the treaties of peace which the Arab tribes now sought to establish with the Muslims, but which later they frequently violated. The eighth section directs the Muslims to be ready to deal a blow and to be well equipped, because they could only hope to secure peace by strength and readiness. The ninth informs them that they will have to fight against even ten times their number, and thus really gives them to understand that they must be prepared to meet overwhelming numbers. The last section explains how far those Muslims who had chosen to remain with their polytheistic brethren should be assisted, laying emphasis on the sacredness of treaties made, even with unbelieving tribes, although believing members may be the sufferers.

In the historical order of events this chapter should have taken its place after the second chapter ; but owing to its peculiar nature as affording proof of the truth of the Prophet's mission, it finds its proper place after a full discussion of prophethood in the last chapter, and thus affords an illustration in the Prophet's own life of the discomfiture which overtakes the opponents of prophets and which is illustrated by reference to the histories of earlier prophets in the last chapter. The major portion of this chapter was revealed after the battle of Badr, i.e. in the second year of Hejira ; but the concluding verses of the seventh section and the eighth section, containing as they do clear references to the repeated violation of agreements by the unbelievers, must have been revealed during the period preceding the conquest of Mecca, or possibly in that immediately following, as these violations ultimately led to the declaration of immunity which finds expression in the chapter that follows.

SECTION 1.—Preparation for the Battle

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 They ask thee about the accessions. Say: The accessions are for God and the Apostle.[1] So be careful of (your duty to) God and set aright matters of your difference, and obey God and His Apostle if you are believers.
2 Those only are believers whose hearts become full of fear when God is mentioned, and when His communications are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord do they trust, 3 Those who keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. 4 These are the believers in truth; they shall have from their Lord exalted grades and forgiveness and an honourable sustenance. 5 Even as thy Lord caused thee to go forth from thy house with the truth, though a party of the believers were surely averse;[2] 6 They disputed with thee

[1] *Anfál* is the plural of *nafl*, which means *an addition* or *accession to what is due*. There is much difference of opinion among the commentators as to what is meant by accessions (*anfál*) here. The most generally received opinion is that it means property acquired during the war, being in this sense synonymous with *ghanímat*. The significance of *Anfál* being for God and the Apostle is that it was to be considered as public property, which could be used in the advancement of the public cause. Such property did not become the personal property of the Holy Prophet.

[2] The circumstances of the battle of Badr have been misunderstood, even by some Muslims. Christian opinion on the point is summed up in Palmer's note: "The occasion alluded to was one when Muhammad had made preparations for attacking an unarmed caravan on its way from Syria to Mecca, when Abu Sufian, who was in charge of it, sent to Mecca, and obtained an escort of nearly a thousand men; many of Muhammad's followers wished to attack the caravan only, but the Prophet and his immediate followers were for throwing themselves on the escort."

While the several incidents mentioned here are separately true, with this exception that the Meccan army never formed an escort of Abu Sufian, there is a misconception as to their relation to each other. It is true that a caravan was returning from Syria, and an army had marched forth from Mecca; it is also true that some of the Muslims wished that they should encounter the caravan and not face the Meccan force. Had the Holy Prophet desired to plunder the caravan, he would have done it long before Abu Sufian could obtain succour from Mecca. Medina was situated at a distance of thirteen days' journey from Mecca, so that if the Holy Prophet had actually an idea of plundering the caravan when it approached Medina, succour could not have reached Abu Sufian in less than a month, even if he had been apprised of the Holy Prophet's intentions and had sent for aid from Mecca. And why should the Prophet have waited all this while and not plundered the caravan before the help reached Abu Sufian?

Badr, where the encounter took place, lies at a distance of three days' journey from Medina. Here, marching towards each other, the two armies met. This shows that the Meccan army had long been on its way to Medina, while the Muslims were as yet quite unprepared. The

about the truth after it had become clear, (and they went forth) as if they were being driven to death while they saw (it). 7 And when God promised you one of the two parties that it shall be yours, and you loved that the one not armed should be yours;[1] and God desired to manifest the truth of what was true by His words[2] and to cut off the root of the unbelievers, 8 That He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, though the guilty disliked. 9 When you sought aid from your Lord, so He answered you: I will assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another.[3] 10 And God only gave it as a good news and that your hearts might be at ease thereby; and victory is only from God; surely God is Mighty, Wise.

SECTION 2.—Battle of Badr

11 When He caused calm to fall on you as a security from Him and sent down upon you water from the cloud that He might thereby purify you, and take away from you the uncleanness of the devil, and that He might fortify your hearts, and steady (your) footsteps thereby.[4]

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enemy had marched forth for ten days and the Muslims only for three days when the two forces encountered each other, which shows clearly that the Muslims had turned out to take the defensive against an invading force. The Prophet had never any design of plundering the caravan, for if he had any such design he could have carried it out long before the Meccan force had approached Medina, and his hands would thus have been strengthened to meet a powerful enemy. It is quite clear that the Holy Prophet only marched forth when the enemy had already travelled over three-fourths of the way to Medina, and the caravan had left Medina far behind. It is also known that a party of the believers were averse to fighting. They could not have been averse if they had had to encounter only an unarmed caravan. What is said in the next verse makes it clearer still, *they went forth as if they were being driven to death,* because they knew that they were going to meet an enemy not only treble in numbers, but also much more powerful and efficient.

[1] The two parties referred to were the unarmed caravan of the Quraish going to Mecca and the armed force of the Quraish that had started from Mecca.

[2] By this is meant the truth of the prophecies relating to the battle of Badr; see 54 : 45 for instance. The words occurring there were the words recited aloud by the Holy Prophet on the day of Badr; see also 25 : 25.

[3] See note on 3 : 123. What follows here makes it quite clear that the angels were not sent down to fight but only to strengthen the hearts of the believers and to cast terror in the heart of the enemy.

[4] Before the rain fell, the Muslim position was very weak. The rain strengthened the position of the Muslims and consequently comforted their hearts. This was a purification, for after the rainfall they all became certain of the Divine help, and so of their triumph over the enemy, and all their misgivings vanished away.

12 When thy Lord revealed to the angels: I am with
you, so make firm those who believe; I will cast terror
into the hearts of those who disbelieve, so strike above
their necks and strike off every finger-tip of them. 13 This
is because they acted adversely to God and His Apostle;
and whoever acts adversely to God and His Apostle—
then surely God is severe in requiting (evil). 14 This—
taste it, and (know) that for the unbelievers is the chastise-
ment of fire. 15 O you who believe! when you meet
those who disbelieve marching for war, then turn not
your backs to them. 16 And whoever shall turn his
back to them on that day—unless he turn aside for the
sake of fighting or withdraw to a company—then he,
indeed, becomes deserving of God's displeasure, and his
abode is hell; and an evil destination shall it be. 17 So
you did not slay them, but it was God Who slew them,
and thou didst not smite when thou didst smite (the
enemy), but it was God Who smote,[1] and that He might
confer upon the believers a good gift from Himself; surely
God is Hearing, Knowing. 18 This—and that God is the
weakener of the struggle of the unbelievers. 19 If you
demanded a judgment, the judgment has indeed come
to you;[2] and if you desist, it will be better for you;
and if you turn back (to fight), We (too) shall turn back,
and your forces shall avail you nothing, though they may
be many, and (know) that God is with the believers.

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[1] The Muslims slew the enemy, but it is affirmed that really they did not slay, but it was God who slew them; the meaning apparently being that God's hand was working in the battle, which is also clear from the fact that three hundred, mostly raw, young men, unequipped, prevailed against a thousand of the most renowned warriors. The same meaning must be attached to the other passage relating to the smiting of the enemy. Whether the Prophet actually cast a handful of pebbles at the enemy, which discomfited the latter, is a different question. It is sufficient to learn that a powerful enemy was discomfited by about a third of its number, while from the point of view of efficiency and equipment even ten men from among the Muslims were not equal to one of the enemy. It was God's hand that slew them, and it was His hand that smote them and ultimately put them to rout. That the Prophet actually cast a handful of dust at the enemy is in no way inconsistent with this explanation.

[2] It is related that when the Quraish left Mecca to attack the Muslims, they held to the curtains of the Kaba and prayed thus: "O God! assist the best of the two forces and the most rightly directed of the two parties and the most honoured of the two groups and the most excellent of the two religions." Thus they had prayed for a judgment which had now been delivered against them notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers.

SECTION 3.—**Faithfulness to the Prophet**

20 O you who believe! obey God and His Apostle
and do not turn back from Him while you hear. 21 And
be not like those who said, We hear, and they did not
obey. 22 The vilest of animals, in God's sight, are the
deaf (and) the dumb, who do not understand. 23 And
if God had known any good in them, He would have made
them hear, and if He makes them hear they would turn
back while they withdraw. 24 O you who believe!
answer (the call of) God and His Apostle when he calls
you to that which gives you life; and know that God
intervenes between man and his heart,[1] and that to Him
you shall be gathered. 25 And fear an affliction which
may not smite those of you in particular who are unjust;[2]
and know that God is severe in requiting (evil). 26 And
remember when you were few, deemed weak in the land,
fearing lest people might carry you off by force, but He
sheltered you and strengthened you with His aid and
gave you of the good things that you may give thanks.
27 O you who believe! be not unfaithful to God and the
Apostle, nor be unfaithful to your trusts while you know.
28 And know that your property and your children are a
temptation, and that God is He with Whom there is a
mighty reward.

SECTION 4.—**Complete Overthrow of Enemy**

29 O you who believe! if you are careful of (your
duty to) God, He will grant you a distinction and do away
with your evils and forgive you; and God is the Lord of
mighty grace. 30 And when those who disbelieved
devised plans against thee that they might confine thee
or slay thee or drive thee away; and they devised plans
and God too had arranged a plan; and God is the best
of planners.[3] 31 And when Our communications are

[1] *Heart* here stands for *the desires of the heart.* The Divine intervention is the cutting off of those desires. The faithful are enjoined to be quick in responding to the call of the Prophet, and not to indulge in worldly desires, for these may soon be cut off.

[2] The reference is not to one particular incident, but generally to all afflictions that are of such a widespread nature as to overtake even others, in addition to those for whom they are primarily intended.

[3] The reference is to the final plans of the Quraish when, the companions having emigrated to Medina, the Prophet was left alone at Mecca.

recited to them, they say: We have heard indeed; if we pleased we could say the like of it; this is nothing but the stories of the ancients. 32 And when they said: O God! if this is the truth from Thee, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful chastisement. 33 But God was not going to chastise them while thou wert among them, nor is God going to chastise them while yet they ask for forgiveness.[1] 34 And what (excuse) have they that God should not chastise them while they hinder (men) from the Sacred Mosque and they are not (fit to be) guardians of it; its guardians are only the righteous, but most of them do not know.[2] 35 And their prayer before the House is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands; taste the chastisement, for you disbelieved. 36 Those who disbelieve spend their wealth to hinder (people) from the way of God; so they shall spend it, then it shall be to them an intense regret, then they shall be overcome; and those who disbelieve shall be driven together to hell, 37 That God might separate the impure from the good, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell; these it is that are the losers.

SECTION 5.—**Badr Victory was a Sign**

38 Say to those who disbelieve, If they desist, that which is past shall be forgiven to them; and if they return,[3] then what happened to the ancients has already

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Various plans were suggested at a great meeting of the Quraish chiefs in their town hall; the plan ultimately adopted was that the Prophet should be slain, a number of youths belonging to different tribes thrusting their swords into his body at one and the same time, so that one man or tribe should not have the charge laid against him or it. It was with this object that the Prophet's house was surrounded, but he got away unnoticed. The Divine plan was that the unbelievers should see the downfall of their power at the hands of the Prophet.

[1] The punishment was to overtake them when the Holy Prophet was no more among them, i.e. after his flight from Mecca. But even then the punishment might be averted if they asked for forgiveness.

[2] The unbelievers are here declared not to be the true guardians of the Sacred Mosque, because while that mosque was an emblem of the pure Unity of the Divine Being, its name having been clearly associated with monotheism since the time of Abraham, the unbelievers who now posed as its guardians were idolaters. So they are told that they are unfit to hold its guardianship, which would henceforth be made over to a people who guard against evil, i.e. the Muslims.

[3] Desisting and returning both relate to *fighting against the Muslims*

passed.[1] 39 And fight with them until there is no more persecution and all religions should be for God; but if they desist, then surely God sees what they do. 40 And if they turn back, then know that God is your patron; most excellent is the Patron, and most excellent the Helper.

PART X

41 And know that whatever thing you acquire in war, a fifth of it is for God and for the Apostle and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer,[2] if you believe in God and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met; and God has power over all things; 42 When you were on the nearer side (of the valley) and they were on the farthest side, while the caravan was in a lower place than you;[3] and if you had mutually made an appointment, you would certainly have broken away from the appointment, but in order that God might bring about a matter which was to be done, that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof;[4]

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[1] The meaning is that they could read their own doom in the doom of those with whom God had dealt previously in similar circumstances.

[2] The division of what is thus acquired in the war is plainly given in the verse. The most generally accepted opinion is that one-fifth of the whole property acquired is to be divided again into five parts, the Prophet, the near of kin, the orphans, the poor, and the wayfarer having equal shares. Thus the twenty-fifth part fell to the Prophet, an equal portion was given over to the Prophet's near of kin, all individuals belonging to the tribes of Bani-Hashim and Bani-Abdul Muttalib being sharers therein, and three twenty-fifths were given to the orphans, the poor, the needy, and the wayfarers; while four-fifths were divided among those who were considered as having taken part in the fight. As to the Prophet's twenty-fifth, it appears from certain anecdotes that it was also used for the benefit of the Muslims. "Before Islam it had been the custom among the Arabians to assign a fourth part of the booty to the leader of an expedition" (Rodwell's note). So if the Holy Prophet had taken a fourth, there would have been no objection, but he took the twenty-fifth and even that was spent on the welfare of the Muslims.

[3] The position of the three parties, i.e. the party of the Muslims and two parties of the Quraish, is here made clear. The Muslims were on the nearer side, i.e. *the side nearer to Medina;* the main army of the Quraish was on the farthest side, i.e. *the side which was nearer to Mecca and farthest from Medina,* while the caravan was in a lower place, i.e. *towards the sea-coast and farther away from Medina on its way to Mecca.*

[4] The affair at Badr afforded a clear proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet's mission, because the unbelievers had been repeatedly told that as a proof of the truth which the Prophet brought to them, a discomfiture

and God is Hearing, Knowing: 43 When God showed
them to thee in thy dream as few; and if He had shown
them to thee numerous, you would have become weak-
hearted and you would have disputed about the matter,
but God saved (you): surely He is the Knower of what
is in the hearts. 44 And when He showed them to
you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He made you
to appear little in their eyes, in order that God might
bring about a matter which was to be done, and to God
are all affairs returned.

SECTION 6.—**Muslims to be Firm and United**

45 O you who believe! when you meet a party, then
be firm, and remember God much, that you may be suc-
cessful. 46 And obey God and His Apostle and do not
quarrel, for then you will be weak in hearts and your power
will depart; and be patient, for God is with the patient.
47 And be not like those who came forth from their homes
in great exultation and to be seen of men, and (who) turn
away from the way of God,[1] and God comprehends what
they do. 48 And when the devil made their works fair-
seeming to them and said: No people can overcome you
this day, and I am your protector; but when the two
parties came in sight of each other, he turned upon his
heels, and said: I am clear of you, for I see what you do
not see; I fear God; and God is severe in requiting (evil).

SECTION 7.—**Enemy's Treaty Violations**

49 When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was
disease said: Their religion has deceived them. And
whoever trusts in God, then surely God is Mighty, Wise.
50 And hadst thou seen when the angels will cause to
die those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their
backs, and (saying): Taste the punishment of burning.
51 This is for what your own hands have sent on before,
and because God is not in the least unjust to the servants:
52 In the manner of the people of Pharaoh and those

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of their power at the hands of the Holy Prophet would be brought about in this very life, and their forces and wealth would not then be of any use to them.

[1] The reference is clearly to the army of the Quraish, which had marched forth in great exultation to destroy Medina.

before them: they disbelieved in God's communica-
tions, therefore God overtook them on account of their
sins; surely God is Strong, Severe in requiting (evil).
53 This is because God has never changed a favour which
He has conferred upon a people until they change their
own condition; and because God is Hearing, Knowing;
54 In the manner of the people of Pharaoh and those
before them; they rejected the communications of their
Lord, therefore We destroyed them on account of their
sins and We drowned Pharaoh's people, and they were
all unjust. 55 The vilest of animals in God's sight are
those who disbelieve, then they would not believe;
56 Those with whom thou makest an agreement, then
they break their agreement every time and they are not
careful (of their duty).[1] 57 So if thou overtake them in
fighting, then scatter by (making an example of) them
those who are in their rear, that they may be mindful.
58 And if thou fear treachery on the part of a people,
then throw back to them on terms of equality; surely
God does not love the treacherous.

SECTION 8.—Peace by Strength

59 And let not those who disbelieve think that they
shall come in first; they shall not weaken (Us). 60 And
prepare against them what force you can and horses
tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of
God and your enemy,[2] and others besides them, whom you
do not know (but) God knows them; and whatever thing
you will spend in God's way, it will be paid back to you
fully and you shall not be dealt with unjustly. 61 And
if they incline to peace, do thou incline to it and trust
in God; He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 62 And if
they intend to deceive thee[3]—then surely God is sufficient

[1] The use of the words *every time* with regard to these violations shows clearly that the Muslims never hesitated in making a new agreement when one was violated, but the unbelievers did not even then respect their engagements; hence, as a last resort, the Muslims are allowed to repudiate unrespected agreements (v. 58).

[2] The Muslims are told that they must in future keep themselves well prepared and avail themselves of all sources of strength, so that the enemy should by their very preparations assume a peaceful attitude, for it was evident that the weakness of the Muslims was a temptation for their opponents to attack them.

[3] I.e. If they intend to deceive you under cloak of peace, even in such a case peace is to be accepted.

for thee; He it is who strengthened thee with His help
and with the believers, 63 And united their hearts;
hadst thou spent all that is in the earth, thou couldst
not have united their hearts, but God united them; He is
Mighty, Wise. 64 O Prophet! God is sufficient for thee
and (for) such of the believers as follow thee.

SECTION 9.—**Overwhelming Numbers to be faced**

65 O Prophet! urge the believers to war;[1] if there are
twenty patient ones of you, they shall overcome two
hundred, and if there are a hundred of you they shall
overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because
they are a people who do not understand.[2] 66 For the
present God has made light your burden, and He knows
that there is weakness in you;[3] so if there are a hundred
patient ones of you they shall overcome two hundred,
and if there are a thousand they shall overcome two
thousand by God's permission; and God is with the
patient. 67 It is not fit for a prophet that he should
take captives unless he has fought and triumphed in the
land; you desire the frail goods of this world, while God
desires (for you) the hereafter; and God is Mighty, Wise.
68 Were it not for an ordinance from God that had already
gone forth, there would have befallen you a great chastise-
ment for what you had taken to.[4] 69 Eat then of the

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[1] Because the Muslims were being attacked, and war was now a duty which devolved on them to save their very life.

[2] This prophecy was fulfilled not only in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, but also in all early Islamic wars—so long as the Muslims were *patient*. From the battle of Badr to the war with the Persian and the Roman Empires, the Muslim force that took the field against the enemy was invariably much smaller, from a third to a tenth of the opposing force, and yet victory was always on the side of the Muslims.

[3] The "present" was the time when the Muslims were first called upon to take up arms in self-defence, though no Muslim army worth the name was in existence. Every man available, young or old, sick or healthy, had to fight so as to save the very life of the community. This is referred to in the words: *He knows that there is weakness in you.* So the Muslim forces as then constituted could at most be a match for double their numbers. But a time did come when they were a match for ten times their numbers. So both the statements in the Quran proved true in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and the one does not abrogate the other. In the field of Badr, the Muslims overcame thrice their numbers; at Uhud, four times, and two years later, in the battle of the Confederates, they routed ten times their number.

[4] Vv. 67, 68 do not disapprove, as is generally thought, the taking of ransom from the prisoners taken at Badr. The taking of such ransom is not

lawful and good (things) which you have acquired in war, and be careful of (your duty to) God; surely God is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 10.—Relations with Non-Muslims

70 O Prophet! say to those of the captives who are
in your hands: If God knows anything good in your
hearts, He will give to you better than that which has
been taken away from you[1] and will forgive you, and
God is Forgiving, Merciful. 71 And if they intend to
act unfaithfully towards thee, so indeed they acted un-
faithfully towards God before, but He gave (you) mastery
over them; and God is Knowing, Wise. 72 Those who
believed and fled (their homes) and struggled hard in
God's way with their property and their souls, and those
who gave shelter and helped—these are guardians of
each other; and those who believed and did not fly,
not yours is their guardianship until they fly; and if they
seek aid from you in the matter of religion, aid is incum-
bent on you except against a people between whom and
you there is a treaty, and God sees what you do.[2] 73 And
those who disbelieve—some of them are the guardians
of others; if you do not the same, there will be persecu-
tion in the land and great mischief.[3] 74 And those who

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only clearly allowed in 47 : 4, which is decidedly an earlier revelation, being prior to the battle of Badr, but express approval of what the Prophet did is also contained further on in v. 70. In fact 47 : 4 contains a clear commandment that prisoners of war must be set free whether as a favour or on paying ransom, and there is not a single verse in the Holy Quran allowing the putting to death of the prisoners of war. Vv. 67, 68 clearly refer to the idea entertained by some Muslims that they should attack the caravan of Abu Sufyan; see v. 7. They are told in v. 67 that such an attack would have been against the Divine commandments—*a desire for the frail goods of this life*. The ordinance spoken of in v. 68 relates to the bringing about of a struggle with the Meccan army; see v. 42.

[1] This refers to the ransom taken from the prisoners of war.

[2] Those who believed, and having been persecuted fled from their homes, formed a community at Medina along with those who gave shelter and helped them, i.e. the *Ansar* of Medina. But there were those who chose to remain in their homes. The Muslim community at Medina could not undertake to guard the interests of such persons, and this is what is meant by saying, *not yours is their guardianship*. But if they sought help in the matter of religion, it was incumbent on the Muslim community to give them help, unless there existed a treaty of alliance with the people against whom such help was sought.

[3] That is, if you do not help your Muslim brethren in the matter of religion as the unbelievers help each other.

believed and fled and struggled hard in God's way, and those who gave shelter and helped, these are the believers truly; they shall have forgiveness and honourable provision.
75 And those who believed afterwards and fled
and struggled hard along with you, they are of you; and the possessors of relationships are nearer to each other in the ordinance of God[1]; surely God knows all things.

CHAPTER 9

AL-BARÁ'AT: THE IMMUNITY

(*Medina*—16 *sections*; 129 *verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the opening statement which contains a declaration of immunity from obligations with such of the idolatrous tribes as had repeatedly broken their engagements. This declaration is one of the most important events in the history of Islam, for hitherto the Muslims had constantly suffered from the hostility of the unscrupulous idolatrous tribes who had no regard for their treaties, dealing a blow at the Muslims whenever they had an opportunity of doing so. As the Muslims had, in the first instance, to suffer persecutions for a long time before they were allowed to take up the sword in their own defence, so a second time immunity was given to them from their obligations only after the repeated violation of treaties by their foes.

This is not really a new chapter, and this accounts for *Bismillah* being omitted from the opening. It is admittedly a part of the last chapter, while a distinct name has been assigned to it by reason of the importance of the declaration of *immunity* from which it takes its name. A reference to the seventh and eighth sections of the last chapter will show that the idolaters repeatedly broke the agreements which bound them to remain on peaceful terms with the Muslims. This frequent violation ultimately led to the declaration of immunity, because it was impossible that the Muslims should be bound for ever by the terms of those agreements, while their enemies could repudiate them with impunity.

The internal arrangement of the verses is too clear to need any lengthy comment. A declaration of immunity necessitated by the repeated treaty violations of the idolaters is made in the first section, with two clear exceptions, however; one in the case of those tribes who had remained true to their obligations, and a second in the case of idolaters who sought protection from the Muslims. These latter were to be conducted safely to their tribes,

[1] When even strangers who have accepted Islam and fled from their homes become "of you," those who have in addition ties of relationship, possess every title to have their interests guarded by the Muslim community.

and were not to be molested in any way These two exceptions are a sufficient condemnation of the hypothetical picture drawn of the Holy Prophet in which he is accused of inviting people to Islam with the Quran in one hand and the sword in the other. The second section gives the chief reason for freeing the Muslims from the liabilities of certain agreements, again stating expressly that the Muslims were to stand firm by their agreements so long as the other party adhered to their terms. In the third section the idolaters are told that their pretensions relating to the entertainment of the pilgrims and the repairing or building of the Sacred House could not now save them from the consequences of their own deeds, while the conclusion of that section calls attention to the sacrifices which the Muslims would now be required to make in the cause of truth. The next section naturally asserts the ultimate triumph of Islam, not only against the idolatrous tribes of Arabia, but also against the powerful Christian nation which had now stirred itself to humiliate the growing Muslim power. A reference to the Christians renders it necessary to deal in the next section with the falling off of both the Jews and the Christians from the pure monotheism of their great prophets, the section being closed with a reference to the evil influence which the Jew had exercised on the Arabs by making them violate the sanctity of the recognized sacred months. Thenceforward to the end, with the exception of the last three sections, are contained references to the Tabuk expedition, and particularly to those who had been intentionally guilty of a default in joining the expedition—thus the hypocrites are condemned, and spiritual and temporal connections with them are cut off. The hypocrites had made their presence clearly felt among the Muslims from the time of the battle of Uhud, in the third year of the Hejira, and they had been given a chance up to the close of the ninth year to mend their ways or to openly side with this or that party, and the final word with regard to them was now urgently needed.

The three concluding sections are a natural sequel to the subject of hypocrisy. What marks the truly faithful, and what is expected of them, is stated respectively in the fourteenth and fifteenth sections. Wars were not the aim and object of Islam, but had really been forced on it, and the faithful are told, at the end of a chapter which almost entirely deals with treaty obligations, ultimatums, and wars, that they must make arrangements for the propagation of Islam, and that every Muslim community must contribute men for the noble object of spreading the truth, the real object of Islam. The last section shows what effect the revelation of the Quran had upon the Muslims and the great anxiety of the Prophet for their welfare.

The whole of this chapter was revealed at Medina, towards the close of the Holy Prophet's life, in the ninth year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—**Declaration of Immunity**

1 (This is a declaration of) immunity by God and His Apostle towards those of the idolaters with whom you

made an agreement.[1] 2 So go about in the land for four months and know that you cannot weaken God and that God will bring disgrace to the unbelievers. 3 And an announcement from God and His Apostle to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage[2] that God and His Apostle are free from liability to the idolaters; therefore if you repent, it will be better for you, and if you turn back, then know that you will not weaken God; and announce painful chastisement to those who disbelieve—4 Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you, so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term: for God loves the righteous.[3] 5 So when the sacred months have passed away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush; but if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; for God is Forgiving, Merciful.[4] 6 And if one of the idolaters seek protection from thee, grant him

[1] The fourth verse makes it clear that the people meant are those with whom the Muslims made an agreement but they broke it. It is a fact that the idolatrous tribes of Arabia broke their agreements with the Muslims again and again (8 : 56). This violation of agreements especially took place when the Muslims were absent on the Tabuk expedition. The first thirteen verses of this chapter were publicly proclaimed by Ali, on the occasion of the pilgrimage in the ninth year of Hejira. The attitude of the tribes is well indicated in their reply: "O Ali! deliver this message to your cousin (i.e. the Prophet), that we have thrown the agreements behind our backs, and there is no agreement between him and us except smiting with spears and striking with swords."

[2] The ninth or the tenth of Zulhaj, being the day of the great assemblage of the pilgrimage in the plains of Arafat and Mina.

[3] If the Muslims had been fighting with the idolaters on account of their religion, why should there be an exception in favour of those idolaters who had been true to their engagements?

[4] The clear exception of the last verse shows that by the idolaters here are meant only those idolaters who violated agreements. Nor does the exception in v. 11 show that Islam was offered as an alternative to the sword. The essential fact to be borne in mind is that all the polytheists of the world, even all the idolaters of Arabia, are not spoken of in the verse. The persons spoken of are those who had repeatedly violated their agreements and inflicted severe losses upon the Muslims. They, therefore, deserved to be killed or besieged or taken prisoners. This punishment was a direct consequence of their previous actions in the form of depredations committed on the Muslims. Yet, if they joined the brotherhood of Islam, there was an absolute change in their condition, and hence the punishment which they otherwise deserved could be remitted. It was a case of forgiving a criminal who had truly repented and regenerated.

protection till he hears the word of God, then make him attain his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know.[1]

SECTION 2.—Reasons for Immunity

7 How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with God and with His Apostle, except those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque? So as long as they are true to you, be true to them; for God loves those who are careful (of their duty). 8 How (can it be)! while if they prevail against you, they would not pay regard in your case to ties of relationship, nor those of covenant; they please you with their mouths while their hearts do not consent; and most of them are transgressors. 9 They have taken a small price for the communications of God, so they turn away from His way; evil is it that they do. 10 They do not pay regard to ties of relationship nor those of covenant in the case of a believer; and these are they who go beyond the limits.[2]
11 But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, they are your brethren in faith; and We make the communications clear for a people who know. 12 And if they break their oaths after their agreement and (openly) revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unbelief—for their oaths are nothing—so that they may desist.[3]
13 What! will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Apostle, and they

[1] This verse leaves no doubt that the idolaters and the non-Muslims were not to be slain on account of their religion. Even Sale explains the meaning of this to be, "You shall give him a safe conduct that he may return home securely in case he shall not think fit to embrace Muhammadanism."

[2] Note the repeated assertions of the Quran that the unbelievers who are to be fought against are those who, in the case of a believer on whom they can lay hands, pay no regard either to ties of relationship or to treaty obligations. No remedy was left for the covert mischief of these people, except that the agreements should be overtly repudiated and a period put to all their mischief.

[3] This is a clear prophetic reference to the apostasy and rebellious movement after the death of the Holy Prophet. The leaders of this movement were in fact the very tribes who had constantly molested the Muslims and committed depredations on them, and now that the time had come for their punishment they outwardly joined the Muslim movement while they were still waiting for an opportunity for mischief. This was the reason that Abu Bakr had to wage war on them. They were not simply apostates but also rebels who thought this to be a fit opportunity to deal a death-blow to Islam.

attacked you first;[1] do you fear them? God is most deserving that you should fear Him, if you are believers.
14 Fight them; God will chastise them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and relieve the hearts of a believing people,
15 And remove the rage of their hearts; and God turns (mercifully) to whom He pleases, and God is Knowing, Wise.
16 What! do you think that you will be left alone while God has not yet known those of you who have struggled hard and have not taken any one as an adherent besides God and His Apostle and the believers; and God is aware of what you do.

SECTION 3.—Idolaters' Pretensions

17 The idolaters have no right to visit the mosques of God while bearing witness to unbelief against themselves;[2] these it is whose doings are null, and in the fire shall they abide.
18 Only he shall visit the mosques of God who believes in God and the latter day, and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate and fears none but God; so these, it may be, that they are of the followers of the right course.
19 What! do you make (one) giving drink to the pilgrims and guarding the Sacred Mosque like him who believes in God and the latter day and strives hard in God's way? They are not equal with God; and God does not guide the unjust people.
20 Those who believed and fled (their homes), and strove hard in God's way with their property and their souls, are much higher in rank with God; and those are they who achieve (the object).
21 Their Lord gives them good news of mercy from Himself and (His) good pleasure and gardens, wherein lasting blessings shall be theirs;
22 Abiding therein for ever; surely God has a mighty reward with Him.
23 O you

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[1] This shows that the tribes against whom a declaration of immunity was made were fully determined to extirpate Islam and were the first to attack the Muslims.

[2] Particularly the Sacred Mosque at Mecca, as being the centre of all the mosques of the world. This is made clear by the use of the words *Sacred Mosque* in v. 19 in the place of *the mosques of God*. With the conquest of Mecca, the Sacred Mosque was denuded of all idols, and was now as pure an emblem of monotheism as in the time of Abraham; there remained not a single vestige of idol-worship. Hence the idol-worshippers had nothing to do with it now, because the help which they sought from their idols could no longer be obtained there.

who believe! do not take your fathers and your brothers
for guardians if they love unbelief more than belief;
and whoever of you takes them for a guardian, these it
is that are the unjust. 24 Say: If your fathers and your
sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk
and property which you have acquired, and trade the
dullness of which you fear, and dwellings which you like,
are dearer to you than God and His Apostle and striving
in His way, then wait till God brings about His command;
and God does not guide the transgressing people.[1]

SECTION 4.—**Islam shall triumph**

25 God did surely help you in many battlefields and
on the day of Hunain, when your numbers made you
vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became
strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, so you
turned back retreating.[2] 26 Then God sent down His
tranquillity upon His Apostle and upon the believers, and
sent down hosts which you did not see, and chastised
those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the un-
believers. 27 Then will God after this turn (mercifully)
to whom He pleases, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.
28 O you who believe! the idolaters are nothing but
unclean,[3] so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque
after this year; and if you fear poverty, then God will
enrich you out of His grace if He please,[4] for God is Know-

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[1] The Holy Quran does not condemn wealth and the amassing of wealth outright, nor does it require one to hate riches actually; it only condemns being obsessed by wealth to the neglect of one's higher duties and responsibilities. The acquisition of wealth is not harmful so long as it is not made the real aim in life, but has its proper place as the means to an end.

[2] The battle of Hunain, fought in the eighth year of Hejira in the valley of Hunain, about three miles from Mecca, differed from the other battles inasmuch as the Muslims here outnumbered the enemy, the tribes of Hawazin and Saqeef being about 4,000 strong, while the Muslims are said to have been as many as ten or even twelve thousand. Their excess in number led them to vanity, with the result that they at first took to flight; the archers of the enemy being very good shooters, the Muslims could not at first face them. The Prophet, however, led the assault, at first alone, in the face of the archers, but was soon joined by others and a victory was obtained, as the next verse shows.

[3] Because they indulged in evil practices and went naked round the Kaba, or the reference is to their impure designs against the Muslims.

[4] The importance of Mecca as a commercial centre lay in the fact that the whole of Arabia repaired to it in the season of the pilgrimage, and there carried out important commercial transactions. The prohibition referred to in the first part of the verse could have been easily foreseen

ing, Wise. 29 Fight those who do not believe in God, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what God and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.[1]

SECTION 5.—Jews and Christians fall off

30 And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of God; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of God. These are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before;[2] may God curse them;

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as affecting the commerce and consequently the prosperity of Mecca, but worldly or business considerations never interfered with the carrying out of the moral reforms of Islam.

[1] The last word on the wars with the idolaters of Arabia having been said, this verse introduces the subject of fighting with the followers of the Book. Though the Jews had for a long time assisted the idolatrous Arabians in their struggle to uproot Islam, the great Christian power of the Roman Empire had only just mobilized its forces for the subjection of the new religion, and the Tabuk expedition followed, which constitutes the subject-matter of a large portion of what follows in this chapter. As the object of this Christian power was simply the subjection of the Muslims, the words in which their final vanquishment by the Muslims is spoken of, are different from those dealing with the final vanquishment of the idolatrous Arabians. The Quran neither required the idolaters to be compelled to accept Islam, nor was it in any way its object to bring the Christians into subjection. The idolaters had determined to compel the Muslims to give up Islam and the Christians had resolved to bring them under subjection. The fate of each was therefore according to what it proposed to do to the Muslims. The word *jizyah* is derived from *jazá*, meaning *he gave satisfaction*, and means *the tax that is taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim Government as a compensation for the protection which is guaranteed them, the non-Muslim subjects being free from military service*. It may also be added that the permission to fight, as given to the Muslims, is subject to the condition that the enemy should first take up the sword, *Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you* (2 : 190); the Holy Prophet never overstepped this limit. He fought against the Arabs when they took up the sword to destroy the Muslims, and he led an expedition against the Christians when the Roman Empire first mobilized its forces with the object of subjugating the Muslims. And so scrupulous was he, that when he found that the enemy had not yet taken the initiative, he did not attack the Roman Empire, but returned from Tabuk without fighting.

[2] That there was a sect among the Jews who raised Ezra to the dignity of godhead, or son of God, is shown by Muslim historians. Another explanation of the statement made here is the free use of the word *son*. Among the prophets of Israel, Ezra was specially honoured. In Rabbinical literature Ezra was considered "worthy of being the vehicle of the law, had it not been already given through Moses." The doctrine of the sonship of Messiah is here plainly stated to be an imitation of earlier idolatrous systems, and this is now an established fact.

how they are turned away! 31 They have taken their
doctors of law and their monks for lords besides God,[1]
and (also) the Messiah, son of Mary; and they were
enjoined that they should serve one God only, there is
no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up
(with Him) 32 They desire to put out the light of God
with their mouths, and God will not consent save to
perfect His light, though the unbelievers are averse.[2]
33 He it is who sent His Apostle with guidance and the
religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over
all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.[3]
34 O you who believe! many of the doctors of law and
the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and
turn (them) from God's way; and those who hoard up
gold and silver and do not spend it in God's way, announce
to them a painful chastisement.[4] 35 On the day when
it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then their foreheads
and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it:
This is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore
taste what you hoarded. 36 The number of months
with God is twelve months in God's ordinance since the
day when He created the heavens and the earth, of these
four being sacred; that is the right reckoning, therefore
be not unjust to yourselves regarding them,[5] and fight the

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[1] Most of the commentators agree that it does not mean that they took them actually for gods; the meaning is that they obeyed them in what they enjoined and what they forbade, and therefore they are described as having taken them for lords, on account of attaching to them a dignity which ought to have been attached only to God. Muslims who accord a similar position to their *pirs* or saints and *maulvis* are guilty of the same error.

[2] This is a prophecy of the ultimate triumph of the principles of Islam in face of severe opposition from the Jews and the Christians. Though the Jewish opposition died long ago, the Christian opposition has been growing stronger day by day.

[3] Temporary political triumph of the followers of one religion over those of another does not mean the triumph of that religion. It is the gradual acceptance of the principles of Islam by the world at large that is bringing about the fulfilment of this prophecy.

[4] The acquisition of wealth is not disallowed, but the hoarding of it so as not to spend it in the cause of truth and for the welfare of humanity is denounced.

[5] The allusion here is to the Arab practice of postponing the pilgrimage to a month other than that in which it fell, for which see the next verse. Whether the object was intercalation, in order to make the solar and lunar years tally, or whether a continuous cessation of war for a fourth part of the year was too long, is a disputed point; but such postponement was undoubtedly a great hardship for the majority of people. The word

polytheists all together as they fight you all together;[1] and know that God is with the righteous. 37 Postponing (of the sacred month) is only an addition in unbelief, wherewith those who disbelieve are led astray, violating it one year and keeping it sacred another,[2] that they may agree in the number (of months) that God has made sacred, and thus violate what God has made sacred; the evil of their doings is made fair-seeming to them; and God does not guide the unbelieving people.

SECTION 6.—**The Tabuk Expedition**

38 O you who believe! what (excuse) have you that when it is said to you, Go forth in God's way, you should incline heavily to earth;[3] are you contented with this world's life instead of the hereafter? But the provision of this world's life compared with the hereafter is but little. 39 If you do not go forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement and bring in your place a people other than you, and you will do Him no harm, and God has power over all things. 40 If you will not help him, God certainly helped him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion:[4] Grieve not, surely God is with us. So

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din here does not mean *religion*, but *reckoning*. The verse does not make solar computation illegal.

[1] Since all idolaters united in fighting with the Muslims, they too were told to fight with them all together.

[2] According to most of the commentators, *nasi* means postponement, and refers to the practice of postponing observance of the sacred months, thus allowing an ordinary month to be observed as sacred and a sacred month to be treated as ordinary. This practice interfered with the security of life which was guaranteed in the sacred months, and is, therefore, denounced. Some commentators take it as referring to the practice of intercalation, but *nasi* means *postponement*, not *addition*.

[3] The reference in what follows is to the expedition of Tabuk, which was undertaken in the middle of the ninth year of Hejira owing to the threatening attitude of the Roman Emperor. There were many hindrances for the raising of an army sufficient to meet the strong forces of the Roman Empire. The chief of these were: (1) a great drought; (2) the length of the journey to the confines of Syria; (3) the ripening of the fruits, which were now ready to be gathered; (4) the intensity of the heat; and (5) the organization and power of the Roman army. Notwithstanding these difficulties, 30,000 men gathered round the Prophet's banner.

[4] This refers to the Prophet's flight from Mecca, when he was forced to hide himself in a cave called Saur, about three miles from Mecca, with only one companion, Abu Bakr. The believers are told that God saved

God sent down His tranquillity upon him and strengthened
him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest
the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of
God, that is the highest; and God is Mighty, Wise. 41 Go
forth light and heavy, and strive hard in God's way with
your property and your persons; this is better for you, if
you know. 42 Had it been a near advantage and a short
journey, they would have followed thee, but the tedious
journey was too long for them;[1] and they swear by
God: If we had been able, we would have gone forth with
you. They cause their own souls to perish, and God knows
that they are liars.

SECTION 7.—**Hypocrites remain behind**

43 God pardon thee![2] why didst thou give them leave
until those who spoke the truth had become manifest
to thee and thou hadst known the liars? 44 They do
not ask leave of thee who believe in God and the latter
day (to stay away) from striving hard with their property
and their persons, and God knows the righteous. 45 They
only ask leave of thee who do not believe in God and the
latter day and their hearts are in doubt, so in their doubt
do they waver. 46 And if they had intended to go forth,
they would have provided equipment for it, but God did
not like their going forth, so He withheld them, and it
was said (to them): Hold back with those who hold
back. 47 Had they gone forth with you, they would
not have added to you aught save corruption, and they
would have hurried about among you seeking (to sow)
dissension among you, and among you there are those
who hearken for their sake; and God knows the unjust.
48 Certainly they sought (to sow) dissension before, and
they meditated plots against thee until the truth came,
and God's commandment prevailed although they were
averse (to it). 49 And among them there is he who says:

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the Prophet from the hands of his enemies when he had but one companion amidst a whole nation of opponents, for he had his trust in God; and that God would not leave him helpless now.

[1] This verse and what follows refer to the hypocrites.

[2] This is a peculiar form of address, and is used to show, as Razi has it, greater honour and respect to the person addressed. And it is clear that the occasion is one for praise, not for reproof, as the Holy Prophet showed lenience towards the hypocrites.

Allow me and do not try me. Into trial have they
already tumbled down, and surely hell encompasses the
unbelievers. 50 If good befalls thee, it grieves them,
and if hardship afflicts thee, they say: Indeed we had
taken care of our affair before; and they turn back and
are glad. 51 Say: Nothing will afflict us save what God
has ordained for us: He is our patron; and on God let
the believers rely. 52 Say: Do you await for us but
one of two most excellent things?[1] And we await for
you that God will afflict you with chastisement from
Himself or by our hands.[2] So wait; we too will wait
with you. 53 Say: Spend willingly or unwillingly, it
shall not be accepted from you; for you are a transgress-
ing people. 54 And nothing hinders their spendings being
accepted from them, except that they disbelieve in God
and in His Apostle, and they do not come to prayer but
while they are sluggish, and they do not spend but while
they are unwilling. 55 Let not their property and their
children excite thy admiration; God only wishes to
chastise them with these in this world's life and (that) their
souls may depart while they are unbelievers. 56 And
they swear by God that they are of you, and they are not
of you, but they are a people who are afraid (of you). 57 If
they could find a refuge or caves or a place to enter into,
they would have turned thereto, running away in all
haste. 58 And of them there are those who blame thee
with respect to the alms; if they are given from it they are
pleased, and if they are not given from it, lo! they are full
of rage. 59 Would that they were content with what God
and His Apostle gave them, and had said: God is sufficient
for us: God will soon give us (more) out of His grace
and His Apostle too: for to God do we make our petition.

SECTION 8.—**Hypocrites' Taunts**

60 Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the
officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts

[1] The two most excellent things are the laying down of life in the cause of truth, or being sharer in the ultimate triumph of truth. The Muslims never thought that they could be defeated. They would either die defending the cause of truth or live and conquer.

[2] The only punishment that the hypocrites received from the hands of the Muslims was that they were named and turned out of the mosque, and were henceforth known as being hypocrites.

are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debt and in the way of God and the wayfarer: an ordinance from God; and God is Knowing, Wise.[1]
61 And there are some of them who molest the Prophet and say: He is one who believes every thing that he hears. Say: A hearer of good for you (who) believes in God and believes the faithful, and a mercy for those of you who believe; and those who molest the Apostle of God, shall have a painful chastisement.
62 They swear to you by God that they might please you; and God, as well as His Apostle, has a greater right that they should please Him, if they are believers.
63 Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to God and His Apostle, he shall have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement.
64 The hypocrites fear lest a chapter should be sent down to them telling them plainly of what is in their hearts. Say: Go on mocking, God will bring forth what you fear.
65 And if thou shouldst question them, they would say: We were only idly discoursing and sporting. Say: Was it at God and His communications and His Apostle that you mocked?
66 Do not make excuses; you have denied indeed after you had believed; if We pardon a party of you, We will chastise (another) party because they are guilty.

SECTION 9.—**Hypocrites shall not succeed**

67 The hypocritical men and the hypocritical women are all alike; they enjoin evil and forbid good and withhold their hands; they have forsaken God, so He has forsaken them; surely the hypocrites are the transgressors.
68 God has promised the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women and the unbelievers the fire of hell to abide therein; it is enough for them; and God has cursed them and they

[1] That by *alms* is here meant the *obligatory alms*, called the *poor-rate*, and not voluntary alms, is shown by the concluding words of the verse, which calls it an ordinance from God. The verse defines the objects for which the poor-rate may be spent. Altogether eight heads of expenditure are recognized. The recognition of paying of wages of collectors and other servants employed in connection with the poor-rate from that fund shows that the institution was meant for raising a public fund, whose management should entirely be in the hands of a public body. It is sad to note that, as the Quran would have it, the institution of *zakát* is entirely neglected by the Muslims.

shall have lasting chastisement. 69 Like those before
you: they were stronger than you in power and
had more wealth and children, so they enjoyed their
portion; thus have you enjoyed your portion as those
before you enjoyed their portion; and you entered into
vain discourses like the vain discourses in which entered
those before you. These are they whose works are null
in this world and the hereafter; and these are they who
are the losers. 70 Has not the news of those before them
come to them: of the people of Noah and Ad and Samood,
and the people of Abraham and the dwellers of Midian
and the overthrown cities. Their apostles came to them
with clear arguments; and it was not God Who should
do them injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.
71 And the believing men and the believing women are
guardians of each other; they enjoin good and forbid
evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey
God and His Apostle. (As for) these, God will show
mercy to them; surely God is Mighty, Wise. 72 God
has promised to the believing men and the believing women
gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly
dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and greatest
of all is God's goodly pleasure—that is the grand achievement.

SECTION 10.—**Hypocrites' Offences**

73 O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers
and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their
abode is hell, and evil is the destination.[1] 74 They swear
by God that they did not speak, and they did speak,
the word of unbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam, and
they had planned what they have not been able to effect,[2]
and they do not speak ill except because God and His
Apostle enriched them out of His grace; therefore if

[1] *Jáhada* signifies *he strove or exerted himself*, and *jihád* is *the using one's utmost power in contending with an object of disapprobation.* It is in a secondary sense that the word signifies *fighting*, but it is repeatedly used in the Holy Quran in its primary significance, and this is one of the occasions which establishes the truth of this beyond all doubt, because those who professed Islam were never fought against, even though their professions may have manifestly been insincere—as on this occasion and on the occasion of the battle of Uhud. All that is meant is to continue preaching forcibly against the unbelievers and hypocrites. In 25 : 52 and elsewhere the word *jihád* is used in the same sense.

[2] This is the slaying of the Prophet and the extirpation of Islam.

they repent, it will be good for them; and if they turn
back, God will chastise them with a painful chastisement
in this world and the hereafter, and they shall not have
in the land any guardian or a helper. 75 And there are
those of them who made a covenant with God: If He
give us out of His grace, we will surely give alms and we
will surely be of the good ones. 76 But when He gave
them out of His grace, they became niggardly of it and
they turned back, and they withdrew. 77 So He made
hypocrisy to follow as a consequence into their hearts
till the day when they shall meet Him, because they failed
to perform towards God what they had promised with Him
and because they told lies. 78 Do they not know that God
knows their hidden thoughts and their secret counsels, and
that God is the great Knower of the unseen things?
79 Those who taunt the free givers of alms among the
believers and them who cannot find but to the extent of
their power, so they scoff at them; God will pay them
back their scoffing, and they shall have a painful chastise-
ment. 80 Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask for-
giveness for them;[1] even if thou ask forgiveness for them
seventy times, God will not forgive them; this is because
they disbelieve in God and His Apostle, and God does not
guide the transgressing people.

SECTION 11.—**Relations with Hypocrites cut off**

81 Those who were left behind were glad on account of
their sitting behind God's Apostle and they were averse
from striving in God's way with their property and their
persons, and said: Do not go forth in the heat. Say:
The fire of hell is much severer in heat. Would that they
understood (it). 82 They shall laugh little and weep much
as a recompense for what they earned. 83 So if God
bring thee back to a party of them, and they ask thy

[1] An incident is related in the Bukhari that when Abdulla bin Ubayy, chief of the hypocrites, died, and the Holy Prophet was requested to offer funeral prayers for him, he did so on the ground that he had a choice in the matter, referring to these words. The incident shows how kind and forgiving he was to his severest enemies. Abdulla bin Ubayy was the man who had led the hypocritical movement against him the whole of his life, and thus was not only one of his worst enemies, but at the same time a most dangerous one, because he was aware of all the movements of the Muslims and deceived them at the most critical moments. Yet the Holy Prophet would have forgiven him entirely.

permission to go forth, say: By no means shall you ever go forth with me and by no means shall you fight an enemy with me; as you chose to sit the first time, therefore sit (now) with those who remain behind.[1] 84 And never offer prayer for any one of them who dies and do not stand by his grave; surely they disbelieve in God and His Apostle and they die in transgression.[2] 85 And let not their property and their children excite thy admiration; God only wishes to chastise them with these in this world and (that) their souls may depart while they are unbelievers. 86 And whenever a chapter is revealed, saying, Believe in God and strive hard along with His Apostle, those having ampleness of means ask permission of thee and say: Leave us (behind) that we may be with those who sit. 87 They preferred to be with those who remained behind, and a seal is set on their hearts so they do not understand. 88 But the Apostle and those who believe with him strive hard with their property and their persons; and these it is who shall have the good (consequences) and these it is who shall be successful. 89 God has prepared for them gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them; that is the great achievement.

SECTION 12.—**Hypocritical Bedouins**

90 And the defaulters from among the dwellers of the desert came that permission may be given to them, and they who lied to God and His Apostle sat (at home); a painful chastisement shall afflict those of them who disbelieved. 91 It is no crime in the weak, nor in the

[1] The hypocrites were not henceforth to join the Muslims in defence of the Islamic state. Such was the punishment inflicted on them. This meant the cessation of temporal relations with them. The reason is plain: they were at heart the enemies of Islam.

[2] This meant the cutting off of spiritual relations with the hypocrites. The reason is that they disbelieved in God and His Apostle. The Holy Prophet had been informed that they were unbelievers in heart, and therefore should not be treated as Muslims; the burial service of Islam was only for Muslims and not for unbelievers. It is, further, clear from the words of this verse that those who were known to be hypocrites were not punished with death or fought against, but lived to die a natural death. The case of Abdulla bin Ubayy, who died in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, and that of Salba, who died in the reign of Usman, are sufficient to prove this, while there is not a single case on record of any of them having been put to death. They were treated first as Muslims, then as disbelievers, but they were not put to death for thus overtly returning to disbelief.

sick, nor in those who do not find what they should spend
(to stay behind), so long as they are sincere to God and
His Apostle; there is no way (to blame) against the doers
of good; and God is Forgiving, Merciful; 92 Nor in
those who when they came to thee that thou mightest
carry them, thou didst say, I cannot find that on which
to carry you;[1] they went back while their eyes over-
flowed with tears on account of grief for not finding that
which they should spend. 93 The way (to blame) is only
against those who ask permission of thee though they are
rich; they have chosen to be with those who remained
behind, and God has set a seal upon their hearts so they do
not know.

PART XI

94 They will excuse themselves to you when you go
back to them. Say: Urge no excuse, by no means will
we believe you; God indeed has informed us of matters
relating to you; and now God and His Apostle will see
your doings, then you shall be brought back to the Knower
of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of
what you did. 95 They will swear to you by God when
you return to them so that you may turn aside from them;
so do turn aside from them; for they are unclean and
their abode is hell; a recompense for what they earned.
96 They will swear to you that you may be pleased with
them; but if you are pleased with them, yet surely God
is not pleased with the transgressing people. 97 The
dwellers of the desert are very hard in unbelief and hypoc-
risy, and more disposed not to know the limits of what
God has revealed to His Apostle;[2] and God is Knowing,
Wise. 98 And of the dwellers of the desert are those who
take what they spend to be a loss, and they wait (the
befalling of) calamities to you: on them (will be) the
evil calamity; and God is Hearing, Knowing. 99 And
of the dwellers of the desert are those who believe in God
and the latter day and take what they spend to be (means
of) the nearness of God and the Apostles' prayers; now

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[1] I.e. horses or camels to ride upon or to carry their provisions.

[2] It was such stubborn people that the Holy Quran had to reform. A part of them were so reformed, as v. 99 shows.

surely it shall be means of nearness for them; God will make them enter into His mercy; for God is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 13.—Punishment of Hypocrites

100 And the foremost, the first of the *Muhájirs* and the
Ansár,[1] and those who followed them in goodness, God is
well pleased with them and they are well pleased with
Him, and He has prepared for them gardens in which
rivers flow, to abide in them for ever; that is the mighty
achievement. 101 And from among those who are round
about you of the dwellers of the desert there are hypocrites,
and from among the people of Medina (also); they are
stubborn in hypocrisy; thou dost not know them; We
know them. We will chastise them twice,[2] then shall
they be turned back to a grievous chastisement. 102 And
others have confessed their sins; they have mingled a good
deed and an evil one; maybe God will turn to them
(mercifully); for God is Forgiving, Merciful. 103 Take
alms out of their property, thou wouldst cleanse them and
purify them thereby; and pray for them,[3] for thy prayer
is a relief to them; and God is Hearing, Knowing. 104 Do
they not know that God accepts repentance from His

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[1] *Muhájirín* is plural of *muhájir*, meaning literally *one who flies from or forsakes his home*, and *ansár* is plural of *násir*, meaning *one who helps*. In the history of Islam the former word came to signify all those companions of the Holy Prophet who, having embraced Islam at Mecca, had to fly from their homes either to Abyssinia or to Medina; the latter flight, including about all the Meccan Muslims, is known as *the Flight*, and the Muslim era dates from it. The latter word signifies the Medina Muslims who, having accepted Islam before the Flight, gave shelter to those who fled from Mecca.

[2] The hypocrites were punished twice in this life. They had to take part in all contributions for the defence of the Muslim community and more or less in the defence itself, and had to pay the poor-rate, all this against their conviction and unwillingly, and this was, no doubt, a source of great torment to them. After having suffered all this torment for the sake of being reckoned Muslims, they were ultimately separated from the Muslims, for it is reported that the Holy Prophet named them while addressing a congregation in the Juma prayers, and they had to leave the assembly in the sight of the whole congregation, and this exposure to public shame was no doubt a second punishment for them.

[3] The Prophet's acceptance of alms from them is here spoken of as purifying them of evil, while his prayer for them is described as bringing peace and quiet to them, and this is an example of the effectiveness of the Holy Prophet's intercession for his followers. It also shows that poor-rate was not accepted from the hypocrites.

servants and accepts the alms, and that God is the Oft-
returning (to mercy), the Merciful? 105 And say, Work;
so God will see your work and (so will) His Apostle and the
believers; and you shall be brought back to the Knower
of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of
what you did. 106 And others are made to await God's
command,[1] whether He chastise them or whether He
turn to them (mercifully); and God is Knowing, Wise.
107 And those who built a mosque to cause harm and
for unbelief and to cause disunion among the believers
and an ambush to him who made war against God and
His Apostle before;[2] and they will swear, We did not
desire aught but good; and God bears witness that they
are liars indeed. 108 Never stand in it; certainly a
mosque founded on piety from the very first day is more
deserving that thou shouldst stand in it; in it are men
who love to be purified; and God loves those who purify
themselves. 109 Is he, therefore, better who lays his
foundation on carefulness of (duty to) God and (His) good
pleasure, or he who lays his foundation on the edge of a
cracking hollowed bank, so it breaks down with him into
the fire of hell; and God does not guide the unjust people.
110 The building which they have built will ever con-
tinue to be a source of disquiet in their hearts, except
that their hearts get cut into pieces;[3] and God is Know-
ing, Wise.

SECTION 14.—The Faithful

111 God indeed has bought of the believers their persons
and their property for this that they shall have the

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[1] This refers to three of the believers who held back from the expedition, viz. Kab-bin-Malik, Halal-bin-Umayya, and Mararah bin Rabi. Their case is dealt with in v. 118.

[2] Twelve men from among the hypocrites built a mosque at the instigation of Abu Amir, a Christian monk, in the neighbourhood of the mosque at Quba, with the object of causing harm to that mosque. Abu Amir, who, after fighting against the Holy Prophet for a long time, had fled to Syria after the battle of Hunain, had written to his friends at Medina that he was coming with a formidable army to crush the Prophet, and that they should build a mosque for him. But Abu Amir died in Syria, and the founders desired the Holy Prophet to give it a blessing by his presence, which he was forbidden to do by Divine revelation, and the mosque was demolished.

[3] Their hearts could be cut into pieces either by severe regret or by sincere repentance.

garden ;[1] they fight in God's way, so they slay and are slain ; a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran ; and who is more faithful to his covenant than God ? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made ; and that is the mighty achievement. 112 They who turn (to God), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of God ; and give good news to the believers. 113 It is not (fit) for the Prophet and those who believe that they should ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even though they should be near relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are inmates of the flaming fire.[2] 114 And Abraham's asking forgiveness for his sire was only owing to a promise which he had made to him ; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of God, he declared himself to be clear of him ; Abraham was certainly very tender-hearted, forbearing. 115 It is not (attributable to) God that He should lead a people astray after He has guided them ; He even makes clear to them what they should guard against ;[3] surely God knows all things. 116 God's

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[1] The *Garden* in the Holy Quran stands for the achievement of the grand object of life—for a full development of the human faculties ; and the condition laid down here for this achievement is that the faithful should exert themselves with their person as well as their property in the way of God. Jesus expressed the same idea when he told a wealthy man : "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matt. 19 : 21). And so even Moses : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might" (Deut. 6 : 5). The words that follow, *they fight*, etc., are a proof of their entire devotion to the cause of truth.

[2] It should be noted that this verse does not prohibit praying for the forgiveness of the unbelievers in general, but only such unbelievers of whom it has become clear that they are inmates of the flaming fire, and in the next verse it is made clear that even Abraham continued to pray for his idolatrous sire until he clearly saw that he had become an enemy of God. The question is, when is a man to be considered to have become an open enemy of God, or an inmate of the flaming fire ? When a prophet is raised to uproot errors and establish the truth, there rises in opposition to him a class of men who exert themselves to their utmost in extirpating the truth. Thus Abraham's sire became an enemy of God, not on the first occasion when he refused to forsake idolatry, but when he had spent every effort to destroy the preacher of truth. So also about the idolaters of Arabia, the sentence of incorrigibility did not go forth even while they persecuted the Holy Prophet at Mecca, but when it became clear that they massed all their forces to sweep away all traces of Islam. Their doom was then settled, and it was useless to pray for their forgiveness.

[3] The verse establishes in clear words that God never leads a people

is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He brings
to life and causes to die; and there is not for you besides
God any guardian or helper. 117 God has indeed turned
(mercifully) to the Prophet and those who fled (their
homes) and the helpers who followed him in the hour of
straitness [1] after the hearts of a part of them were about to
deviate, then He turned to them (mercifully); to them
He is surely Compassionate, Merciful. 118 And to the
three who were left behind, until the earth became strait
to them notwithstanding its spaciousness, and their souls
were also straitened to them; and they knew it for certain
that there was no refuge from God but in Him; then
He turned to them (mercifully) that they might turn (to
Him); surely God is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the
Merciful.[2]

SECTION 15.—Duty of the Faithful

119 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to)
God and be with the true ones.[3] 120 It did not beseem the
people of Medina and those round about them of the dwellers
of the desert to remain behind the Apostle of God, nor
should they desire (any thing) for themselves in preference
to him; this is because there afflicts them not thirst or
fatigue or hunger in God's way, nor do they tread a path
which enrages the unbelievers, nor do they attain from
the enemy what they attain, but a good work is written
down to them on account of it; for God does not waste the

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astray; and how should He lead astray, says the Holy Quran, when He goes to the extent of making clear to them what evil they should guard against?

[1] Here God's turning mercifully is in relation to those who obeyed His commandments under the severest conditions. This shows that *tauba* is not for sinners only.

[2] The three men were from among the Ansar; see note on v. 106. They remained cut off from all intercourse with Muslims for fifty days. Kab was a man of importance, and when he received a letter from the king of Ghassan offering him a position under him if he deserted the Holy Prophet, he burned the letter, showing his contempt for the offer, and gave no reply.

[3] By the *true ones* are meant those who are steadfast in the cause of truth, true under the hardest trials to what they promise. The last verse deals with the case of three men who had neglected their duty to join the Prophet when he was upholding the cause of truth; this one lays down a general principle that whenever the Muslims see a man upholding the cause of truth, they must join him.

reward of the doers of good; 121 Nor do they spend any thing that may be spent, small or great, nor do they traverse a valley, but it is written down to their credit, that God may reward them with the best of what they have done. 122 And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together; why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious.[1]

SECTION 16.—Purifying Effect of Revelation

123 O you who believe! fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you[2] and let them find in you firmness;[3] and know that God is with the righteous. 124 And whenever a chapter is revealed, there are some of them who say: Which of you has it strengthened in faith? As for those who believe, it strengthens them in faith and they rejoice. 125 And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness and they die while they are unbelievers.[4] 126 Do they not see that they are tried once or twice in every year,[5] yet they do not turn (to God) nor do they mind. 127 And whenever a chapter is revealed, they cast glances at one another: Does any one see you? Then they turn away; God has turned away their hearts because they are a people who do not understand. 128 Certainly an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is your falling into

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[1] The introduction here of this subject of the study of religion shows the aim which the Quran had in view. In the midst of the ordinances relating to fighting, it introduces the subject of the preparation of a missionary force, thus showing that this was the greatest necessity of Islam. It was only by means of a missionary propaganda that truth could be spread, and the ultimate object was not to be lost sight of, even when the community was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against overwhelming forces of the enemy.

[2] Because it was only such unbelievers that gave trouble to the Muslims. This shows that the sword was required for guarding the lives and interests of the Muslims, not for the propagation of religion.

[3] So that you do not yield to them.

[4] The uncleanness of their hearts increased with new revelation, because it increased them in stubbornness, and their hearts were more and more hardened against truth.

[5] The various misfortunes which befell them or their defeat on battlefields is referred to.

distress, excessively solicitous respecting you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful.[1] 129 But if they turn back, say: God is sufficient for me, there is no god but He; on Him do I rely, and He is the Lord of the great throne.

CHAPTER 10

JONAH

(*Mecca*—11 *sections;* 109 *verses*)

ALL that is said in this chapter of Jonah, after whom it is named, is an incidental reference to his people having benefited by the warning; see v. 98. There are more detailed references to Noah and Moses, but as the subject-matter of the chapter deals chiefly with the precedence of mercy over punishment, it is more in accord with Jonah's history; the name, therefore, of that prophet has been fitly chosen as a title.

The chief feature of this chapter is that while it asserts the truth of revelation, it also lays stress on the merciful dealing of the Divine Being with man. It opens with a statement of the truth of Divine revelation in the Holy Quran, proceeding to a disquisition on its truth in the first two sections. The second section closes with a demand for a sign on the part of unbelievers, and they are told that judgment is deferred for a while; the reason being given in the third section, where it is shown that Divine dealing with men is characterized by mercy, and therefore He does not hasten punishment, but first shows mercy. The fourth section tells us that evidence of His mercy exists in nature, for He grants gifts which it is not in the power of any one else to grant, and as material gifts from Him are characterized by uniqueness, so is His gift of revelation, and the like of it cannot be produced by any one else. The fifth section states that the reprobate must ultimately meet with their punishment, while the sixth again calls attention to the preponderance of the quality of mercy in the Divine Being, and the seventh contrasts the believers with the unbelievers. The eighth and ninth sections refer briefly to the histories of Noah and Moses. The tenth states, by a brief allusion to Jonah, that those who heed the warning will benefit, and the last section refers to the Divine judgment which must come.

From the 10th to the 16th chapter we have a group of seven chapters, all, with the exception of the sixteenth, beginning with the letters *alif lám rá*, (the thirteenth alone beginning with *alif lám mím rá*); dealing with the same subject, i.e. the truth of

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[1] This is the true picture of the heart which grieved, not for his followers alone, not for one tribe or country, but for all humanity. He grieves for the burdens of all, and he is solicitous for the welfare of all, but there is a special relation he bears to those who follow him; to them he is, in addition, compassionate and merciful.

the revelation of the Holy Quran with reference to the study of the laws of nature, human nature and previous history; all revealed about the same time, i.e. somewhere between the ninth and twelfth years of the Prophet's ministry at Mecca. They are thus a little earlier than the 6th and 7th chapters which belong to almost the close of the Meccan period, but later than the group which follows them. After a discussion of the truth of Divine revelation in general in the 7th chapter, it was necessary that the truth of the Divine revelation as contained in the Holy Quran should be established in particular, the two intervening chapters, the 8th and 9th, dealing, as it were parenthetically, with the punishment which was meted out to the opponents of the Holy Prophet.

SECTION 1.—**Truth of the Quran**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Seeing.[1] These are the verses of the
Book full of wisdom. 2 What! is it a wonder to the
people that We revealed to a man from among themselves,
saying: Warn the people and give good news to those
who believe that theirs is a footing of firmness with their
Lord. The unbelievers say: This is a manifest enchanter.
3 Surely your Lord is God Who created the heavens and
the earth in six periods, and He holds control on the throne,
regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after
His permission; this is God, your Lord, therefore serve
Him; will you not mind? 4 To Him is your return,
of all (of you); the promise of God (made) in truth;
He begins the creation in the first instance, then He repro-
duces it, that He may with justice recompense those who
believe and do good; and those who disbelieve shall have
a drink of hot water and painful chastisement because they
disbelieved. 5 He it is Who made the sun a shining
brightness and the moon a light, and ordained for it man-
sions that you might know the computation of years and
the reckoning. God did not create it but with truth;
He makes the signs manifest for a people who know.
6 In the variation of the night and the day, and (in) what
God has created in the heavens and the earth, there are
sure signs for a people who guard (against evil). 7 Those

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[1] *Alif, lám* and *rá* are the three letters which stand at the head of this chapter and four other chapters, viz. 11th, 12th, 14th and 15th, while the 13th chapter has *alif, lám, mím, rá*. The abbreviation is of the same form as *alif, lám, mím*, except that *rá* stands for *Ráee*, i.e. *the Seeing*, or *ará*, i.e. *I see*, as the *mím* stands for *a'lam*, i.e. *the best knower*, which also explains the abbreviation at the commencement of the 13th chapter.

who do not hope in Our meeting and are pleased with
this world's life and are content with it, and those who are
heedless of Our communications—8 (As for) these, their
abode is the fire because of what they earned. 9 (As for)
those who believe and do good, their Lord will guide
them by their faith; there shall flow from beneath them
rivers in gardens of bliss. 10 Their cry in it shall be,
Glory to Thee, O God! and their greeting in it shall be,
Peace; and the last of their cry shall be, Praise be to
God, the Lord of the worlds.[1]

SECTION 2.—**Truth of the Quran**

11 And if God should hasten the evil to men as they
desire the hastening on of good, their doom should have
been decreed for them; but We leave those who hope
not for Our meeting in their inordinacy, blindly wandering
on. 12 And when affliction touches a man, he calls on
Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but
when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as
though he had never called on Us for the affliction that
touched him; what they do is thus made fairseeming to
the extravagant. 13 And We did destroy generations
before you when they were unjust, and their apostles had
come to them with clear arguments, and they would not
believe; thus do We recompense the guilty people.
14 Then We made you rulers in the land after them so
that We may see how you act. 15 And when Our clear
communications are recited to them, those who hope
not for Our meeting say: Bring a Quran other than this
or change it. Say: It does not beseem me that I should
change it of myself; I follow naught but what is revealed
to me; indeed I fear chastisement of a mighty day if I
disobey my Lord. 16 Say: If God had desired (other-
wise) I would not have recited it to you, nor would He
have taught it to you; I have lived a lifetime among
you before it; do you not then understand?[2] 17 Who

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[1] This picture of the Muslim paradise deserves to be noted.

[2] The Prophet's truthfulness and honesty before he received the Divine revelation were undisputed, and he had earned such renown for these qualities that he was known in the land as *Al-Amin*, i.e. *the faithful one*. The argument is that if, as they admitted, he had never told a lie in his lifetime, even for the sake of a personal advantage, how could he, now that he had passed the age of youth and passions, speak falsely, and that

is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against God or (who) gives the lie to His communications? Truly the guilty shall not be successful. 18 And they serve besides God what can neither harm them nor profit them, and they say: These are our intercessors with God. Say: Do you (presume to) inform God of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth? Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up (with Him). 19 And people are naught but a single nation, so they disagree;[1] and had not a word already gone forth from thy Lord,[2] the matter would have been decided between them in respect of that concerning which they disagree. 20 And they say: Why is not a sign sent to him from his Lord? Say: The unseen is only for God, therefore wait; I too with you am of those who wait.[3]

SECTION 3.—God's Merciful Dealing

21 And when We make people taste of mercy after an affliction touches them, lo! they devise plans against Our communications. Say: God is quicker to plan; Our messengers write down what you plan. 22 He it is Who makes you travel by land and sea; until when you are in the ships, and they sail on with them in a pleasant breeze, and they rejoice at it, a violent wind overtakes them and the billows surge in on them from all sides, and they become certain that they are encompassed about, they pray to God, being sincere to Him in obedience: If Thou deliver us from this, we will be of the grateful ones. 23 But when He delivers them, lo! they are unjustly rebellious in the earth. O men! your rebellion is against your own souls—a provision (only) of this world's life—then to Us shall be your return, so We will inform you of what you

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to his own detriment? He was not the gainer, but a sufferer thereby, on account of the persecutions which his preaching had brought about for him.

[1] The opponents of the Holy Prophet also disagreed with him or refused to accept him, just as previous people had rejected their prophets, for all people are but a single nation.

[2] The *word* that had gone forth was the postponement of their punishment so long as they allowed the Prophet to live in their midst.

[3] It is clear from the context that their demand is for the punishment with which they are threatened, because they would recognize no other sign; and the reply is that they must look forward to it.

did. 24 The likeness of this world's life is only as water
which We send down from the cloud, then the herbage
of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows luxuriantly
thereby ; until when the earth puts on its golden raiment
and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they
have power over it, Our command comes to it, by night
or by day ; so We render it as reaped seed-produce, as
though it had not been in existence yesterday ; thus do
We make clear the communications for a people who reflect.
25 And God invites to the abode of peace and guides
whom He pleases into the right path.[1] 26 For those who
do good is good (reward) and more (than this) ; and
blackness shall not cover their faces, nor ignominy ; these
are the dwellers of the garden ; in it they shall abide.
27 And those who have earned evil—the punishment of
an evil is the like of it, and abasement shall come upon
them—they shall have none to protect them from God—as
if their faces had been covered with slices of the dense
darkness of night ; these are the inmates of the fire, in
it they shall abide. 28 And on the day when We will
gather them all together, then We will say to those who
set up gods (with God) : Keep where you are, you and your
associates. Then We shall separate them widely one from
another and their associates would say : It was not us that
you served : 29 And God is sufficient as a witness between
us and you that we were quite unaware of your serving
(us). 30 There shall every soul become acquainted with
what is sent before, and they shall be brought back to
God, their true Patron, and what they devised shall escape
from them.

SECTION 4.—**Divine Gifts**

31 Say : Who gives you sustenance from the heaven
and the earth ? Or who controls the hearing and the
sight ? And who brings forth the living from the dead
and brings forth the dead from the living ? And who
regulates the affair ? They will say : God. Say : Will
you not then guard (against evil) ? 32 This is God, your

[1] Here is another description of the Muslim paradise, which is called *the abode of peace*. Thus peace, peace of mind as well as peace of environment, is the goal of Islam. Islam, in fact makes even this world an abode of peace for a true Muslim. Even in this life he makes his peace with his Lord, and he lives at peace with his fellow-men.

true Lord; and what is there after the truth but error; how are you turned back? 33 Thus does the word of thy Lord prove true against those who transgress that they do not believe. 34 Say: Is there any one among your associates who can bring into existence the creation in the first instance, then reproduce it? Say: God brings the creation into existence in the first instance, then He reproduces it: how are you then turned away? 35 Say: Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth? Say: God guides to the truth. Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? What is the matter with you: how do you judge? 36 And most of them do not follow (anything) but conjecture; conjecture certainly does not avail aught against the truth; surely God is cognizant of what they do. 37 And this Quran is not such as could be forged by those besides God, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the book,[1] there is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds. 38 Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: Then bring a chapter like this and invite whom you can besides God, if you are truthful. 39 Nay, they reject that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and the final sequel of it has not yet come to them;[2] even thus did those before them reject (the truth); but see what was the end of the unjust. 40 And of them is he who believes in it, and of them is he who does not believe in it, and thy Lord best knows the mischief-makers.

SECTION 5.—The Reprobate

41 And if they call thee a liar, say: My work is for me, and your work for you; you are clear of what I do

[1] The Quran explains in clear words many of the most important principles of religion which are left ambiguous or obscure in the previous books. For instance, the Bible is obscure on the important principle of resurrection or life after death; Jesus himself, when questioned by the Sadducees, had to resort to an argument instead of quoting chapter and verse (Matt. 22:23). Similarly, the attributes of the Divine Being are not explained in clear words, and the result is the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Quran fully explains all such points and finally settles all these questions.

[2] By the final sequel here is meant the consequence of the rejection of the truth. This is clear from what is said in 7:53.

and I am clear of what you do. 42 And there are those of them who hear thee, but canst thou make the deaf to hear though they will not understand? 43 And there are those of them who look at thee, but canst thou show the way to the blind though they will not see? 44 Surely God does not do any injustice to men, but men are unjust to themselves. 45 And on the day when He will gather them as though they had not stayed but an hour of the day, they will know each other.[1] They will perish indeed who called the meeting with God to be a lie, and they are not followers of the right direction. 46 And if We show thee something of what We threaten them with, or cause thee to die, yet to Us is their return, and God is the bearer of witness to what they do. 47 And every nation had an apostle;[2] so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. 48 And they say: When will this threat come about, if you are truthful? 49 Say: I do not control for myself any harm or any benefit, except what God pleases; every nation has a term; when their term comes, they shall not then remain behind for an hour, nor can they go before (their time).[3] 50 Say: Tell me if His chastisement overtakes you by night or by day! what then is there of it that the guilty would hasten on? 51 And when it comes to pass, will you believe in it? What! now (you believe)! and already you wished to have it hastened on. 52 Then it shall be said to those who were unjust: Taste abiding chastisement; you are not requited except for what you earned! 53 And they ask thee: Is that true? Say: Aye! by my Lord! it is certainly the truth, and you will not escape.

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[1] Because the consequences of good and bad deeds shall be manifest on that day.

[2] See 35:24. This is one of the noblest lessons that the Quran has taught, and for which humanity will always be under the deepest obligation to the Holy Prophet.

[3] The verse does not teach fatalism. It lays down a truth which no historian can deny. To every nation, as to every individual, is granted a term of life, and nations live and die like individuals. What are the circumstances which play a part in the lengthening out or shortening of that term is a different question, but that every nation must live its term of life, and die when that term is finished, is an undoubted truth.

SECTION 6.—Mercy comes First

54 And if every soul that has done injustice had all
that is in the earth, it would offer it for ransom, and they
will manifest regret when they see the chastisement, and
the matter shall be decided between them with justice
and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. 55 Now
surely God's is what is in the heavens and the earth; now
surely God's promise is true, but most of them do not
know. 56 He gives life and causes death, and to Him you
shall be brought back. 57 O men! there has come to
you indeed an admonition from your Lord and a healing
for what is in the hearts and a guidance and a mercy for
the believers.[1] 58 Say: In the grace of God and in His
mercy, in that they should rejoice; it is better than that
which they gather. 59 Say: Tell me what God has sent
down for you of sustenance, then you make (a part) of it
unlawful and (a part) lawful. Say: Has God commanded
you or you forge a lie against God? 60 And what on the
day of resurrection will be the thought of those who forge
lies against God? God indeed is the Lord of grace towards
men, but most of them do not give thanks.

SECTION 7.—Faithful are protected

61 And thou art not (engaged) in any affair, nor dost
thou recite concerning it any portion of the Quran, nor
do you do any work but We are witnesses over you when
you enter into it; and there does not lie concealed from
thy Lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in the
heaven, nor any thing less than that nor greater, but
it is in a clear book.[2] 62 Now surely the friends of God
—they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. 63 Those
who believe and guard (against evil)—64 They shall have
good news in this world's life and in the hereafter; there
is no changing the words of God;[3] that is the mighty

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[1] They demanded punishment again and again, but they are told that God has sent to them first that in which they will find a healing and a guidance and a mercy for them, viz. the Holy Quran. Compare 29 : 51.

[2] It is the book of the Divine law which makes every deed, good or evil, great or small, bring its reward.

[3] The Holy Prophet said: "*Al-bushra*, or *the good news*, signifies *good visions* which the Muslim sees or which are shown to others regarding him." Bukharee also records a saying of the Holy Prophet to the same effect: "There has remained nothing of prophethood except *mubashsharât*. Asked what is meant by *mubashsharât*, he replied, *The good visions*."

achievement. 65 And let not their speech grieve thee,
for might is wholly God's; He is the Hearing, the Knowing.
66 Now, surely, whatever is in the heavens and whatever
is in the earth is God's; and those who call on others
besides God do not (really) follow any associates; they
do not follow (any thing) but conjectures, and they only
lie. 67 He it is Who made for you the night that you
might rest in it, and the day giving light; surely there
are signs in it for a people who would hear. 68 They say:
God has taken a son (to Himself)! Glory be to Him;
He is the Self-sufficient; His is what is in the heavens
and what is in the earth; you have no authority for this;
do you say against God what you do not know? 69 Say:
Those who forge a lie against God shall not be successful.
70 (It is only) a provision in this world, then to Us shall
be their return, then We shall make them taste severe
chastisement because they disbelieved.

SECTION 8.—**Noah and Moses**

71 And recite to them the story of Noah when he said
to his people: O my people! if my abode (with you) and
my reminding (you) by the communications of God is
hard on you—and on God do I rely—then resolve upon
your affair and (gather) your associates, and let not your
affair remain dubious to you, so have it executed against
me and give me no respite: 72 But if you turn back, I
do not ask for any reward from you; my reward is only
with God, and I am commanded that I should be of those
who submit. 73 But they rejected him, so We delivered
him and those with him in the ark, and We made them
rulers and drowned those who rejected Our communica-
tions; see, then, what was the end of the (people) warned.
74 Then did We raise up after him apostles to their people,
so they came to them with clear arguments, but they would
not believe in what they had rejected before; thus it is
that We set seals upon the hearts of those who exceed the
limits.[1] 75 Then did We send up after them Moses and
Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs, but they
showed pride and they were a guilty people. 76 So

[1] How clear and conclusive that seals are set on the heart of those who exceed the limits.

when the truth came to them from Us, they said: This is clear enchantment! 77 Moses said: Do you say (this) of the truth when it has come to you? Is it enchantment? And the enchanters are not successful. 78 They said: Hast thou come to us to turn us away from what we found our fathers upon, and (that) greatness in the land should be for you two? And we are not going to believe in you. 79 And Pharaoh said: Bring to me every skilful enchanter. 80 And when the enchanters came, Moses said to them: Cast down what you have to cast. 81 So when they cast down, Moses said to them: What you have brought is deception; God will make it naught; for God does not make the work of mischief-makers to thrive. 82 And God will show the truth to be the truth by His words, though the guilty may be averse (to it).

SECTION 9.—**Moses and Pharaoh**

83 But none believed in Moses except the offspring of his people, on account of the fear of Pharaoh and their chiefs, lest he should persecute them; and Pharaoh was truly lofty in the land; and he was of the extravagant. 84 And Moses said: O my people! if you believe in God, then rely on Him (alone) if you submit (to Him). 85 They said: On God do we rely; O our Lord! make us not subject to the persecution of the unjust people, 86 And do Thou deliver us by Thy mercy from the unbelieving people. 87 And We revealed to Moses and his brother, saying: Take for your people houses to abide in Egypt and make your houses places of worship and keep up prayer, and give good news to the believers. 88 And Moses said: Our Lord! Thou hast indeed given to Pharaoh and his chiefs finery and riches in this world's life, our Lord, that they may lead (people) astray from Thy way: our Lord! destroy their riches and harden their hearts[1] so that they believe not until they see the painful chastisement. 89 He said: The prayer of you both has indeed been accepted, therefore continue in the right way and do not follow the path of those who do not

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[1] The words may also mean *assault their hearts*, the significance in this case being the destruction of things which were nearest to their hearts, i.e. the finery and riches of this life.

know. 90 And We made the children of Israel to pass
through the sea, and Pharaoh and his hosts followed
them for oppression and tyranny; until when drowning
overtook him, he said: I believe that there is no god
but He in whom the children of Israel believe, and I am
of those who submit. 91 What! now! and indeed thou
didst disobey before and thou wast of the mischief-makers.
92 But We will this day deliver thee with thy body that
thou mayest be a sign to those after thee,[1] and most
of the people are surely heedless to Our signs.

SECTION 10.—Jonah's People

93 And We lodged the children of Israel in a goodly
abode and We provided them with good things; and
they did not disagree until the knowledge had come to
them; thy Lord will judge between them on the resur-
rection day concerning that in which they disagreed.
94 But if thou art in doubt as to what We have revealed
to thee, ask those who read the book before thee; the
truth has indeed come to thee from thy Lord, therefore
thou shouldst not be of the disputers.[2] 95 And thou
shouldst not be of those who reject the communications
of God, (for) then thou shouldst be one of the losers.
96 Those against whom the word of thy Lord has proved
true will not believe, 97 And though every sign should

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[1] That the body was really cast ashore, though the Bible does not mention it, is clear from the fact that the body of Rameses II, who is regarded as the Pharaoh of Moses, has been discovered as preserved among the mummies in Egypt (*Ency. Br.*, Art. Mummy). This is another instance of the insufficiency of the Bible narrative and of the truth of the Quranic statement where it supplements the Bible. The discovery now made could not have been known to the Holy Prophet, and here we have a clear example of the supernatural knowledge contained in the Holy Quran.

[2] It should be noted that the person addressed in the Holy Quran is not always the Holy Prophet, though the form may be singular, as here. It is very often the reader. Nor does the form *revealed to thee* show that the Prophet is meant, for the Holy Quran is in many places spoken of as being revealed to all the people, as, for instance, in *what has been revealed to us* (2 : 136), and in "We have revealed to you a book" (21 : 10). And the opening words of the next section make it clear that the reader is addressed, because there we have: 'Say, O people! if you are in doubt as to my religion." Throughout the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet appears as having the greatest certainty about the Word which was revealed to him, so much so that he never entertained the slightest doubt about the truth of the promises of future success and triumph when to the material eye there appeared nothing around but failure and disappointment.

come to them, until they witness the painful chastisement.
98 And wherefore was there not a town which should
believe so that their belief should have profited them
but the people of Jonah? When they believed, We
removed from them the chastisement of disgrace in this
world's life and We gave them provision till a time.[1]
99 And if thy Lord had pleased, those who are in the
earth would have believed, all of them together; but
wilt thou force men till they become believers?[2] 100 And
it is not for a soul to believe except by God's permission;
and He casts uncleanness on those who do not understand.
101 Say: Consider whatever is in the heavens and
the earth. And signs and warners do not avail a people
who would not believe. 102 What do they wait for
but the like of the days of those who passed away before
them? Say: Wait then, I too am with you of those
who wait. 103 Then We deliver Our apostles and those
who believe—even so (now), it is binding on Us (that) We
deliver the believers.

SECTION 11.—**Divine Judgment**

104 Say: O people! if you are in doubt as to my religion,
then (know that) I do not serve those whom you serve
besides God, but I do serve God, Who causes you to die,
and I am commanded that I should be of the believers;
105 And that thou shouldst keep thy course towards
the religion uprightly; and thou shouldst not be of the
polytheists. 106 And do not call besides God on that
which can neither benefit thee nor harm thee; for if thou
do, thou wilt then be of the unjust. 107 And if God
should afflict thee with harm, there is none to remove it
but He; and if He intends good to thee, there is none

[1] Compare Jonah 3 : 10 : "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them, and He did it not." Jonah bears a resemblance to the Holy Prophet in that his people benefited by the warning, as did the Arabs by the warning of the Holy Prophet, though after much opposition. Jonah is thus the type of a prophet whose people were dealt with mercifully. It was in reference to this aspect of his character that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Do not give me preference over Jonah."

[2] Compare 2 : 256 : "There is no compulsion in religion." The reference is to the great zeal of the Holy Prophet and his over-exerting himself in preaching the truth.

to repel His grace; He brings it to whom He pleases of
His servants; and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.
108 Say: O people! indeed there has come to you the
truth from your Lord; so whoever goes aright, he goes
aright only for the good of his own soul, and whoever goes
astray, he goes astray only to the detriment of it; and I
am not a custodian over you. 109 And follow what is
revealed to thee and be patient till God should give
judgment, and He is the best of the judges.

CHAPTER 11

HÚD

(*Mecca*—10 *sections*; 123 *verses*)

THE name of this chapter is taken from that of the prophet Hud, whose history is referred to herein, because he seems to have been the first prophet to a people living within the Arabian peninsula.

Like the last chapter, this one also deals with the truth of the revelation of the Quran. The opponents are warned first, and the truth of the revelation is most forcibly asserted in the second section by challenging them to produce ten chapters like it, and by showing that the truth of the Quran is borne witness to by previous prophets. A cruel and persecuting enemy is then warned in the six sections that follow of the evil fate of previous people who opposed the well-known prophets Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, and Shuaib. Moses is only briefly referred to in the ninth section, which really demonstrates the Divine law that evil must be followed by evil consequences. The last section requires the Holy Prophet and his followers to maintain the firmest attitude in the cause of righteousness and truth, for good shall not be left without its reward, nor shall evil go unpunished.

The chapter seems to be a complement to the last, which deals mostly with abstract questions relating to the truth of the Quranic revelation, while this illustrates the truth of those questions by referring to the histories of former prophets. It belongs to the same period as the last chapter.

SECTION 1.—**A Warning**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Seeing. (This is) a book, whose verses
are rendered valid (by argument), then are they made
plain, from one Wise, All-aware, 2 That you shall not
serve (any) but God. Surely I am a warner for you from
Him and a giver of good news. 3 And that ask forgiveness

of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you
with a goodly provision to an appointed term and bestow
His grace on every one endowed with grace; and if you
turn back, then I fear for you the chastisement of a great
day. 4 To God is your return, and He has power over
all things. 5 Now surely they fold up their breasts[1]
that they may conceal (their enmity) from Him; now
surely, when they cover themselves with their garments,[2]
He knows what they conceal and what they make public;
for He knows what is in the breasts.

PART XII

6 And there is no animal in the earth but on God is
the sustenance of it, and He knows its resting-place and its
depository; all (things) are in a manifest book. 7 And
He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six
periods—and His throne (extends) on the water[3]—that He
might try you, which of you is best in action; and if thou
say, You shall be raised up after death, those who disbelieve
would say: This is nothing but clear enchantment. 8 And
if We hold back from them the chastisement until a stated
period of time, they will say: What prevents it? Now
surely on the day when it will come to them, it shall not
be averted from them and that which they scoffed at shall
beset them.

SECTION 2.—**Truth of the Quran**

9 And if We make man taste mercy from Us, then
take it off from him, he is despairing, ungrateful. 10 And
if We make him taste a favour after distress has afflicted
him, he will certainly say: The evils are gone away from
me; surely he is exulting, boasting; 11 Except those
who are patient and do good; they shall have forgiveness
and a great reward. 12 Then, may it be that thou wilt

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[1] In Arabic, one is said to *fold his breast* when one *conceals enmity in his bosom*.

[2] *Covering oneself with garments* refers to *the desire not to see* or *hear*. Or, it is an allusion to their *running away*.

[3] All life is produced from water, and hence the special mention of the extension of God's throne on waters along with the creation of heaven and earth, because without water life would have been impossible. Compare 21 : 30, " And We have made of water every thing living."

give up part of what is revealed to thee and thy breast will
become straitened by it because they say: Why has not
a treasure been sent down upon him, or an angel come
with him? Thou art only a warner; and God is custodian
over all things. 13 Or, do they say: He has forged it.
Say: Bring ten forged chapters like it and call upon whom
you can besides God, if you are truthful.[1] 14 But if
they do not answer you, then know that it is revealed
by God's knowledge and that there is no god but He; will
you then submit? 15 Whoever desires this world's life
and its finery, We will pay them in full their deeds therein,
and they shall not be made to suffer loss in respect of
them. 16 These are they for whom there is nothing but
fire in the hereafter, and what they wrought in it shall go
for nothing, and vain is what they do. 17 Is he then
who has with him clear proof from his Lord (like him who
disbelieves)? And a witness from Him recites it and
before it (is) the book of Moses, a guide and a mercy.[2] These
believe in it; and whoever of the (different) parties dis-
believes in it, the fire is his promised place; so be not in
doubt about it; surely it is the truth from thy Lord, but
most men do not believe. 18 And who is more unjust
than he who forges a lie against God? These shall
be brought before their Lord, and the witnesses
shall say: These are they who lied against their
Lord. Now surely the curse of God is on the unjust,
19 Who turn away from the path of God and desire to
make it crooked; and they are disbelievers in the hereafter.
20 These shall not escape in the earth,[3] nor shall they
have any guardians besides God; the chastisement shall

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[1] This challenge is contained in four different chapters of the Holy Quran. In 17 : 88, the like of the whole of the Quran is required to be produced. In the verse under discussion the demand is reduced to ten chapters. And lastly in 10 : 38 and 2 : 23 they are required to produce a single chapter like the Quran.

[2] The several statements made in this verse require to be explained. *He who has with him clear proof from his Lord* applies to every believer in the truth of the Holy Quran, the words *these believe in it* making this clear. The *witness from* God who recites it is the Holy Prophet, who is called a witness elsewhere, as being an exemplar for the believers. Besides being a clear proof in itself, the Holy Quran has a further evidence of its truth in the book of Moses, which is, therefore, called a guide and a mercy, because it contains clear prophecies of the truth of the Holy Prophet.

[3] They would not escape the chastisement if God intended to punish them in this world.

be doubled for them; they could not bear to hear (it) and
they did not see. 21 These are they who have lost their
souls, and what they forged is gone from them. 22 Truly
in the hereafter they are the greatest losers. 23 Those
who believe and do good and humble themselves to their
Lord—these are the dwellers of the garden; in it they
will abide. 24 The likeness of the two parties is as the
blind and the deaf, and the seeing and the hearing; are
they equal in condition? Will you not then mind?

SECTION 3.—Noah warns his People

25 And We sent Noah to his people: I am a plain warner
for you: 26 That you shall not serve any but God;
surely I fear for you the chastisement of a painful day.
27 But the chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his
people said: We do not consider thee but a mortal like
ourselves, and we do not see any have followed thee but
those who are the meanest of us at first thought, and we
do not see in you any excellence over us; nay, we deem
you liars. 28 He said: O my people! tell me if I have
with me clear proof from my Lord, and He has granted me
mercy from Himself and it has been made obscure to you;
shall we constrain you to (accept) it while you are averse
to it? 29 And, O my people! I ask you not for
wealth in return for it; my reward is only with God and
I am not going to drive away those who believe; surely
they shall meet their Lord; but I see that you are an
ignorant people. 30 And, O my people! who will help
me against God if I drive them away? Will you not then
mind? 31 And I do not say to you that I have the
treasures of God; and I do not know the unseen, nor
do I say that I am an angel; nor do I say about those
whom your eyes hold in mean estimation (that) God will
not grant them (any) good—God knows best what is in
their minds—for then surely I should be of the unjust.
32 They said: O Noah! indeed thou hast disputed with
us and lengthened dispute with us, therefore bring to us
what thou threatenest us with, if thou art of the truthful
ones. 33 He said: God only will bring it to you if He
please, and you will not escape: 34 And if I intend to
give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if
God intended that He should cause you to perish; He

is your Lord, and to Him shall you be returned. 35 Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: If I have forged it, on me is my guilt, and I am clear of that of which you are guilty.

SECTION 4.—**Noah's Opponents drowned**

36 And it was revealed to Noah: That none of thy people will believe except those who have already believed, therefore do not grieve at what they do; 37 And make the ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation, and do not speak to Me in respect of those who are unjust; they shall be drowned. 38 And he began to make the ark; and whenever the chiefs from among his people passed by him they laughed at him. He said: If you laugh at us, we too laugh at you as you laugh (at us).[1] 39 So shall you know who it is on whom will come a chastisement which will disgrace him, and on whom will lasting chastisement come down. 40 Until when Our command came and water came forth from the valley,[2] We said: Take into it two of every (needful) thing,[3] a pair, and thy family—except those against whom the word has already gone forth—and those who believe. And there believed not with him but a few. 41 And he said: Embark in it, in the name of God be its sailing and its anchoring; surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful. 42 And it moved on with them amid waves like mountains;[4] and Noah

[1] The *laughing* of the righteous at the wicked is not to be taken literally. You laugh at a thing to show your contempt for it; even as the unbelieving people showed their contempt for the making of the ark, the believer shows his contempt for the unbelief of the others.

[2] The word *tannur* means, *oven*, *surface of earth*, a *place whence waters spring forth* or *where they are collected*. The first meaning does not suit the context.

[3] By *all things* are apparently meant all things needed by Noah, and not all things existing in the world, which was too extensive for Noah to travel over the whole of it.

[4] It should be borne in mind that the Quran does not give any countenance to the story that the deluge covered the whole surface of the earth. On the other hand, it repeatedly speaks of Noah as having been sent to *his people*, i.e. to a single tribe, see v. 25 above, 7:59, etc., and according to 7:64 only those were drowned who not only rejected the truth, but also sought to destroy Noah and his followers. The mention of the water flowing from the valley also shows that it was only a tract of land that was deluged, and not the entire earth. The Bible narrative which makes God "bring a flood of water upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven" is thus contradicted by the Holy Quran.

called out to his son, and he was aloof: O my son! embark with us and be not with the unbelievers. 43 He said: I will betake myself for refuge to a mountain that shall protect me from the water. He said: There is no protector to-day against God's commandment but he on whom He has mercy; and a wave intervened between them, so he was among the drowned. 44 And it was said: O earth, swallow down thy water, and O cloud, clear away; and the water was made to abate and the affair was decided, and (the ark) rested on the Judi,[1] and it was said: Away with the unjust people. 45 And Noah cried out to his Lord and said: My Lord! my son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely true, and Thou art the justest of the judges. 46 He said: O Noah! he is not of thy family; he is (the doer of) other than good deeds,[2] therefore ask not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge; I admonish thee lest thou mayest be of the ignorant. 47 He said: My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge; and if Thou shouldst not forgive me and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers. 48 It was said: O Noah! descend with peace from Us and blessings on thee and on the nations from among those who are with thee, and there shall be nations whom We will afford provision, then a painful punishment from Us shall afflict them. 49 These are announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to thee; thou didst not know them—(neither) thou nor thy people—before this; therefore, be patient; surely the (good) end is for the righteous![3]

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[1] The Greek name of this mountain is said to be Gordyoei, being "one of those mountains which divide Armenia on the south from Mesopotamia" (Sale).

[2] *'Amalun ghairu sálih* (lit., *not a right deed*) stands here for the *doer* of the unrighteous deed, as *birr* (lit., *righteousness*) in 2 : 177 stands for the *doer* of righteousness. In Arabic, when it is intended to speak of a person as the very embodiment of a quality, you speak of him not as the possessor of that quality but as that quality itself, as it were embodied. Thus you say of a man, he is *karam* (lit., *excellence*) or he is *júd* (lit., *charity*) when you mean to say that he is the very embodiment of excellence or charity.

[3] The announcement relating to the unseen is not the history of Noah, but the fate of the Meccans opposed to the Holy Prophet, as read in that history. The words that follow—*be patient*—are a clear indication of what the announcement relating to the unseen was, for patient waiting was needed for the fate of the Holy Prophet's opponents, not for anything relating to Noah's history. At the end of the last section there was also a similar reference to the opponents of the Holy Prophet; compare also

SECTION 5.—Hud warns his People

50 And to Ad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said:
O my people! serve God, you have no god other than
He; you are nothing but forgers (of lies): 51 O my
people! I do not ask of you any reward for it; my reward
is only with Him Who created me; do you not then under-
stand? 52 And, O my people! ask forgiveness of your
Lord, then turn to Him, He will send on you clouds pouring
down abundance of rain and add strength to your strength,
and do not turn back guilty. 53 They said: O Hud! thou
hast not brought to us any clear argument and we are
not going to desert our gods for thy word, and we are not
believers in thee: 54 We cannot say aught but that some
of our gods have smitten thee with evil. He said: I call
God to witness, and do you bear witness too, that I am
clear of what you set up 55 Besides Him; so scheme
against me all together; then give me no respite: 56 Surely
I rely on God, my Lord and your Lord: there is no living
creature but He holds it by its forelock; my Lord is on
the right path.[1] 57 But if you turn back, then indeed
I have delivered to you the message with which I have
been sent to you, and my Lord will bring another people
in your place, and you cannot do Him any harm; surely
my Lord is the Preserver of all things. 58 And when
Our decree came to pass, We delivered Hud and those
who believed with him with mercy from Us, and We
delivered them from a hard chastisement. 59 And this
was Ad; they denied the communications of their Lord,
and disobeyed His apostles and followed the bidding of
every insolent opponent. 60 And they were overtaken
by curse in this world and on the resurrection day; now
surely Ad disbelieved in their Lord; so, away with Ad, the
people of Hud.

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the 26th chapter, in which the history of every prophet is concluded with the words: "There is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe," where the fate of the opponents of the Holy Prophet is indicated as being identical with the fate of those who opposed earlier prophets.

[1] The phrase *my Lord is on the right path* signifies that He does not deviate from justice so that He should destroy the righteous or that the unjust should escape His punishment.

SECTION 6.—**Salih warns his People**

61 And to Samood (We sent) their brother Salih.
He said: O my people! serve God, you have no god
other than He; He brought you into being from the earth,
and made you dwell in it; therefore ask forgiveness of
Him, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Nigh, Answer-
ing. 62 They said: O Salih! thou wert one amongst
us in whom great expectations were placed before this;
dost thou forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped?
And surely we are in disquieting doubt as to that which
thou callest us to. 63 He said: O my people! tell
me if I have clear proof from my Lord and He has granted
to me mercy from Himself—who will then help me against
God if I disobey Him? You do not bring to me anything
but loss: 64 And, O my people! this is God's she-camel
for you, a sign; therefore leave her to pasture on God's
earth and do not touch her with evil, lest a near chastise-
ment should overtake you. 65 But they slew her, so
he said: Enjoy yourselves in your abode for three days,
that is a promise not to be belied. 66 So when Our
decree came to pass, We delivered Salih and those who
believed with him by mercy from Us, and (We saved them)
from the disgrace of that day; surely thy Lord is the
Strong, the Mighty. 67 And the rumbling overtook those
who were unjust, so they became motionless bodies in
their abodes, 68 As though they had never dwelt in
them; now surely did Samood disbelieve in their Lord;
so, away with Samood.

SECTION 7.—**Abraham and Lot**

69 And Our messengers came to Abraham with good
news. They said: Peace. Peace, said he; and he made
no delay in bringing a roasted calf. 70 But when he
saw that their hands were not extended towards it,[1] he
deemed them strange and conceived fear of them. They
said: Fear not, we are sent to Lot's people. 71 And
his wife was standing (by), so she laughed, then We gave
her the good news of Isaac and after Isaac of (a grand-

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[1] Lit., *their hands did not reach it.* The Quran here contradicts the Bible which says that they ate the roasted calf, though it nowhere says that they were angels.

son) Jacob.[1] 72 She said: O wonder! shall I bear a son when I am an extremely old woman and this my husband an extremely old man? Surely this is a wonderful thing. 73 They said: Dost thou wonder at God's bidding? The mercy of God and His blessings are on you, O people of the house; surely He is Praised, Glorious. 74 So when fear had gone away from Abraham and good news came to him, he began to plead with Us for Lot's people. 75 Surely Abraham was forbearing, tender-hearted, oft-returning (to God). 76 O Abraham! desist from this, for the decree of thy Lord has come to pass, and there must come to them a chastisement that cannot be averted. 77 And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was grieved for them, and he lacked strength to protect them, and said: This is a hard day. 78 And his people came to him, (as if) rushed on towards him, and already they did evil deeds. He said: O my people! these are my daughters—they are purer—for you, so guard against (the punishment of) God and do not disgrace me with regard to my guests; is there not among you a right-minded man?[2] 79 They said: Certainly thou knowest that we have no claim on thy daughters, and thou knowest what we desire. 80 He said: Ah! that I had power to repel you, rather I shall have recourse to a strong support.[3] 81 They said: O Lot! we are the messengers of thy Lord; they shall by no means reach thee; so remove thy family in a part of the night—and let none of you turn back, except thy wife, for whatsoever befalls them shall befall her; their appointed time is the morning; is not the morning nigh? 82 So

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[1] Compare Gen. 18 : 10–12. The mention of a son's son (Jacob) was to show that that son should have progeny. It should be borne in mind that *wará*, which ordinarily signifies *behind* or *before*, also means *a son's son* Hence I have translated it here as such.

[2] Lot, it appears from Gen. 19 : 9, was a stranger in the city, and the messengers being strangers, the townsmen would not allow him to keep them. Lot offered his daughters as hostages so that he might be allowed to keep his guests with him, for according to 15 : 70 he had not the permission to allow any stranger under his roof. It may also be noted that the more generally received opinion among the commentators is that Lot did not speak of his own daughters, but of the women of the tribe, because a prophet would speak of the women of his tribe as his daughters, and in that case he did no more than point to the natural relation of man and woman. The answer of his people seems, however, to relate to his daughters.

[3] God is the strong support to Whom the righteous have recourse when they are in trouble.

when Our decree came to pass, We turned them upside down and rained down upon them stones, of what had been decreed, one after another,[1] 83 Marked (for punishment) with thy Lord; and it is not far off from the unjust.[2]

SECTION 8.—**Shuaib's Warning**

84 And to Midian (We sent) their brother Shuaib. He said: O my people! serve God, you have no god other than He, and do not give short measure and weight; I see you in prosperity and I fear for you the chastisement of an all-encompassing day: 85 And O my people! give full measure and weight fairly, and defraud not men of their things, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief: 86 What remains with God[3] is better for you if you are believers, and I am not a keeper over you. 87 They said: O Shuaib! does thy prayer enjoin thee that we should forsake what our fathers worshipped, or that we should not do what we please with regard to our property? Forsooth thou art the forbearing, the right-directing one! 88 He said: O my people! have you considered if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has given me a goodly sustenance from Himself; and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you; I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, and with none but God is the direction of my affair to a right issue; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn: 89 And, O my people! let not opposition to me make you guilty so that there may befall you the like of what befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hud, or the people of Salih, nor are the people of Lot far off from you: 90 And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving-kind. 91 They said: O Shuaib! we do not understand much of what thou sayest and surely we see thee to be weak among us, and were it not for thy family we would stone thee, and thou art not mighty against

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[1] The raining of stones clearly indicates that it was a volcanic eruption combined with an earthquake.

[2] As in the previous instances, the concluding words show a reversion to the subject of the punishment of the Meccan opponents of the Holy Prophet.

[3] I.e. righteous deeds, because their recompense remains with God.

us. 92 He said: O my people! is my family more
esteemed by you than God? And you neglect Him
as a thing cast behind your back; surely my Lord encom-
passes what you do: 93 And, O my people! act accord-
ing to your ability, I too am acting; you will come to
know soon who it is on whom will light the punishment
that will disgrace him and who it is that is a liar, and
watch, surely I too am watching with you. 94 And when
Our decree came to pass We delivered Shuaib and those
who believed with him by mercy from Us, and the rumbling
overtook those who were unjust so they became motion-
less bodies in their abodes, 95 As though they had never
dwelt in them; so perdition overtook Midian as had perished
Samood.

SECTION 9.—The Guilty are punished

96 And We sent Moses with Our communications and a
clear authority, 97 To Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they
followed the bidding of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh's bidding
was not right-directing. 98 He shall lead his people
on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the
fire; and evil the place to which they are brought. 99 And
they were overtaken by curse in this (world) and on the
resurrection day; evil the gift which shall be given.
100 This is an account of (the fate of) the towns which
We relate to thee; of them are some that stand and (others)
mown down. 101 And We did not do them injustice, but
they were unjust to themselves; so their gods whom they
called upon besides God did not avail them aught when
the decree of thy Lord came to pass; and they added but
to their ruin. 102 And such is the punishment of thy
Lord when He punishes the towns while they are unjust;
surely His punishment is painful, severe. 103 There is a
sign in this for him who fears the chastisement of the
hereafter; this is a day on which the people shall be
gathered together and this is a day that shall be witnessed.
104 And We do not delay it but to an appointed term.
105 On the day when it shall come, no soul shall speak
except with His permission, then (some) of them shall be
unhappy and (others) happy. 106 As to those who are
unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be
sighing and groaning in it, 107 Abiding therein so long

as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord
please; surely thy Lord is the mighty doer of what He
intends.[1] 108 And as to those who are made happy,
they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the
heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord please;
a gift never to be cut off. 109 So be not in doubt as to
what these worship; they do not worship but as their
fathers worshipped before; and We will surely pay them
back in full their portion undiminished.

SECTION 10.—**Reward and Punishment**

110 And We gave the book to Moses, but it was gone
against; and had not a word gone forth from thy Lord,
the matter would have been decided between them;
and they are in a disquieting doubt about it. 111 And
thy Lord will surely pay back to all their deeds in full;
He is aware of what they do. 112 Continue then in the
right way as thou art commanded, as also he who has

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[1] This limitation on the duration of abiding in hell—*except as thy Lord please*—is given twice in the Holy Quran, here and in 6 : 129, and it shows clearly that the punishment of hell is not everlasting. A comparison with the verse that follows makes it clearer. There, too, we have that those in paradise shall abide there as long as the heaven and the earth endure, except as thy Lord please, but the statement is immediately followed by another: *a gift which shall never be cut off*, thus showing that in fact there is no limitation upon the eternity of paradise, and the words *except as thy Lord please* have been used only to express the unbounded power and greatness of the Divine Being. In the case of hell, however, the words *except as thy Lord please* are followed by a statement which corroborates the limitation thus placed.

Various sayings of the Holy Prophet corroborate the statement made above. For instance, the concluding portion of one of these which is met with in one of the most reliable collections runs thus: "Then will God say: The angels and the prophets and the faithful have all in their turn interceded for the sinners, and now there remains none to intercede for them except the most Merciful of all merciful ones. So He will take out a handful from fire and bring out a people *who never worked any good*" (Muslim). There are also other sayings in the Kanz-ul-Ummal: "A day will come over hell when it will be like a field of corn that has dried up after flourishing for a while"; and again, "A day will come over hell when there shall not be a single human being in it" (vol. vii. p. 245). There is also a saying of Umar on record: "Even if the dwellers in hell may be numberless as the sands of the desert, a day will come when they will be taken out of it."

One question, however, remains to be answered, and that is the use of the word *abad*, which is generally considered as meaning *for ever*. This abiding in hell for *abad* is mentioned thrice in the Holy Quran, in 4 : 169, 33 : 65, and 72 : 23. It must be borne in mind, however, that *abad* signifies really *a very long time*, as the use of its plural, *ábád*, shows clearly. Even if it indicated infinity, there is the exception *as thy Lord please*.

turned (to God) with thee; and be not inordinate (O
men !), for He sees what you do. 113 And do not incline
to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you,[1] and you
have no guardians besides God, and you shall not be helped.
114 And keep up prayer in the two parts of the day and
in the first hours of the night; for good deeds take away
evil deeds; this is a reminder to the mindful.[2] 115 And
be patient, for God does not waste the reward of the good
doers. 116 But why were there not among the generations
before you those possessing understanding, who should have
forbidden the making of mischief in the earth, except a
few of those whom We delivered from among them? And
those who were unjust went after what they were made
to enjoy of plenty, and they were guilty. 117 And it
did not beseem thy Lord to have destroyed the towns
on account of wrong belief, while their people acted well.[3]
118 And if thy Lord had pleased, He would have made
people a single nation, and they shall continue to differ,[4]
119 Except those on whom thy Lord has mercy; and for
this did He create them;[5] and the word of thy Lord is
fulfilled: I will fill hell with the jinn and the men, all
together.[6] 120 And all We relate to thee of the accounts
of the apostles is to strengthen thy heart therewith; and
in this has come to thee the truth and an admonition, and

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[1] Not only is it forbidden to man to commit any injustice himself, but he should also refrain from leaning towards those who are guilty of injustice.

[2] The times of prayer are clearly indicated in this verse. In the first part of the day is the *fajr*, or *the morning prayer*, before sunrise, and in the second part of the day the *zuhr*, or *the early afternoon*, and *'asr*, or *the later afternoon*, prayer. In the first hours of the night we have the *maghrib*, or the *after sunset prayer*, and the *'ishá*, or the *night prayer*, just before going to bed.

[3] *Zulm* here signifies *wrong belief* as distinct from *guilty conduct*. A nation is not destroyed simply because it holds certain wrong doctrines, but it is destroyed when it makes mischief whatever its beliefs may be.

[4] The meaning is that if it were a Divine law to force men to one particular belief, they would have become a single nation, but as it is, He has so created them that they shall continue to differ, hence some of them accept the truth and others reject it.

[5] Here it is clearly stated that God created all men *to have mercy on them*. By His mercy He guides some to the right path, while to others, who go over to evil and make themselves deserving of hell, mercy shall come only after punishment. It is by their own hands that they get into distress and difficulty, while God has mercy on them in extricating them from it.

[6] Because they went against the ways which God had mercifully shown to them, therefore they must pass through another ordeal, so that they may be purged of evil and made fit for spiritual progress.

a reminder to the believers. 121 And say to those who
do not believe: Act according to your state, we too are
acting: 122 And wait, we are waiting also. 123 And
God's is the unseen in the heavens and the earth, and to
Him is returned the whole of the affair; therefore serve
Him and rely on Him, and thy Lord is not heedless of what
you do.

CHAPTER 12

JOSEPH

(*Mecca*—12 *sections*; 111 *verses*)

THIS chapter receives its title from the story with which it deals. The entire chapter gives a continuous account of the history of Joseph, the first three verses and the concluding section both pointing to the purpose which underlies the story. It is not, in fact, a mere narrative, but foretells the ultimate triumph of the Holy Prophet, who was being turned out of his native city, and also the final submission of those who were plotting against his very life.

In the arrangement of the chapters, the connection of this chapter with the one preceding it is clear. That chapter deals with the histories of several well-known prophets and the fate of their opponents. This prophetically states that the dealings of the enemies towards the Holy Prophet, and those of the Holy Prophet towards his enemies, were more in the nature of the mutual dealings of Joseph and his brothers, there being strict persecution on one side, and entire forgiveness and merciful dealing on the other. For date of revelation see note on ch. 10.

SECTION 1.—Joseph's Vision

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Seeing. These are the verses of the
Book that makes manifest. 2 We have revealed it—an
Arabic Quran—that you may understand. 3 We explain
to thee with the best explanation by Our revealing to thee
this Quran, though before this thou wert certainly of the
unaware ones.[1] 4 When Joseph said to his father: O
my father! I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon—

[1] The Prophet's unawareness relates to his own future, of which this chapter gives a clear indication in the incidents of Joseph's life, viz. that he shall be expelled from his home as Joseph was expelled, but that his countrymen shall ultimately come to him in submission, asking pardon for their faults, as Joseph's brothers had done. Or it may refer to all those things that are related in the Quran, because the Prophet knew nothing of them before the revelation.

I saw them making obeisance to me. 5 He said: O my son! do not relate thy vision to thy brothers, lest they devise a plan against thee, for the devil is an open enemy to man: 6 And thus will thy Lord choose thee and teach thee the interpretation of sayings and make His favour complete to thee and to the children of Jacob,[1] as He made it complete before to thy fathers, Abraham and Isaac; thy Lord is Knowing, Wise.

SECTION 2.—**Plot against Joseph**

7 Certainly in Joseph and his brothers there are signs for the inquirers.[2] 8 When they said: Joseph and his brother[3] are dearer to our father than we, though we are a (stronger) company; surely our father is in manifest error: 9 Slay Joseph or cast him (forth) into some land, so that your father's regard may be exclusively for you, and after that you may be a righteous people. 10 A speaker from among them said: Do not slay Joseph, and cast him down into the bottom of the pit if you must do (it, so that) some of the travellers may pick him up. 11 They said: O our father! what reason hast thou that thou dost not trust in us with respect to Joseph? and we are his sincere well-wishers: 12 Send him with us to-morrow that he may enjoy himself and sport and we will guard him well. 13 He said: It grieves me that you should take him off, and I fear lest the wolf devour him while you are heedless of him. 14 They said: If the wolf should devour him notwithstanding that we are a (strong) company, we should then certainly be losers. 15 So when they had gone off with him and agreed that they should put him down at the bottom of the pit, and We revealed to him: Thou shalt inform them of this their affair while they do not perceive.[4] 16 And they came to their father

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[1] Compare Gen. 37 : 10, where Jacob looks contemptuously upon Joseph's vision and even rebukes him. The statement made in the Quran is more in keeping with his office as a prophet.

[2] I.e. Inquirers as to the future of the Holy Prophet.

[3] I.e. Benjamin, his brother by the same mother.

[4] The essential difference between the two versions of this story, one given in the Bible and the other in the Quran, is that while the Bible narrates it as a simple story, the Holy Quran preserves in it the spiritual element which alone can justify its record in a book meant for the spiritual guidance of man. Here is a child whose age does not exceed seventeen

at nightfall, weeping. 17 They said: O our father! we went off racing and left Joseph by our goods, and the wolf devoured him, and thou wilt not believe us though we are truthful. 18 And they brought his shirt with false blood upon it. He said: Nay, your souls have made the matter light for you, but patience is good, and God is He Whose help is sought for against what you describe.[1] 19 And there came travellers and they sent their water-drawer and he let down his bucket. He said: O good news! this is a youth; and they concealed him as an article of merchandise, and God knew what they did. 20 And they sold him for a small price, a few pieces of silver, and they showed no desire for him.

SECTION 3.—**Joseph is Firm under Temptations**

21 And the Egyptian who bought him said to his wife: Give him an honourable abode, maybe he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son. And thus did We establish Joseph in the land and that We might teach him the interpretation of sayings; and God overcomes (all) in (the execution of) His command, but most people do not know. 22 And when he had attained his maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good. 23 And she in whose house he was, sought to make himself yield (to her), and she made fast the doors and said: Come forward. He said: I seek God's refuge; my Lord made good my abode; surely the unjust do not prosper. 24 And she made for him, and he would have made for her, were it not that he had seen the manifest evidence of his Lord;[2] thus (it was)

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years, who, though to all appearance lost for ever, receives a Divine revelation and promise that he will one day be the master of his present oppressors. It is this circumstance in the life of a prophet which really enables him to face all distresses and difficulties, viz. the deep conviction of the ultimate triumph of truth which is produced by revelation from on high. By omitting the spiritual significance, the Bible narrative divests the story of all its beauty.

[1] The Quran represents Jacob as doubting from the very first the sincerity of Joseph's brothers, but not so the Bible. The latter makes him grieve for the loss of a beloved son as any other mortal would, but the former shows that he had from the first a hope: "And God is He whose help is sought for against what you describe." And throughout the story this hope is the bright ray without which the story would be a gloomy description, devoid of all value as a spiritual lesson.

[2] This does not show that Joseph had the least desire for her; but that the temptation was so strong that if he had not been strengthened

that We might turn away from him evil and indecency, for he was one of Our purified servants. 25 And they both hastened to the door, and she rent his shirt from behind and they met her husband at the door. She said: What is the punishment of him who intends evil to thy wife except imprisonment or a painful chastisement? 26 He said: She sought to make me yield (to her). And a witness of her own family bore witness: If his shirt is rent from front, she speaks the truth and he is one of the liars: 27 And if his shirt is rent from behind, she tells a lie and he is one of the truthful. 28 So when he saw his shirt rent from behind, he said: It is a device of you women; surely your device is great.[1] 29 O Joseph! turn aside from this; and (O my wife!) ask forgiveness for thy sin, for thou art one of the wrong-doers.

SECTION 4.—**More Temptations**

30 And women in the city said: The chief's wife[2] seeks her slave to yield himself (to her); surely he has affected her deeply with (his) love; we see her in manifest error. 31 When she heard of their device,[3] she sent for them and prepared for them a repast, and gave each of them a knife, and said (to Joseph): Come forth to them. When they saw him, they deemed him great, and cut their hands (in amazement), and said: Remote is God (from

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by great faith in God he would have fallen a prey to mortal weakness. The *manifest evidence of his Lord* refers to his great faith in God, for which see previous verse. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was also tempted by his opponents, but he rejected wealth, beauty and leadership all.

[1] The vindication of Joseph's character on this occasion, and the production of the evidence of the shirt, are not related in the Bible; but without it the episode of leaving the garment becomes meaningless. It seems to be a clear omission. The next section proves that Joseph was not cast into prison for being guilty of having committed an outrage against his master's wife. The Quran does not allow even an accusation of this nature to stand against a prophet, but the Bible story makes no attempt at all to establish Joseph's innocence.

[2] *Al-Aziz* stands for Potiphar. It means *mighty, powerful, strong*, and might as such be applied to such a dignitary as the captain of the guard, which rank was held by Potiphar. *Al-Aziz* has become associated with the rulers of Egypt as their title, but the fact that it is not meant here to express that position is clear from the ruler being called *al-Malik*, or the *king* (v. 43), and Joseph himself, who was admittedly not the ruler but only the chief dignitary of the empire, being addressed as *Aziz* in v. 78.

[3] Their *device* is either their secret imputation of the chief's wife, or, more probably, they had suggested to her a plan to entice Joseph. The latter significance is corroborated by v. 50.

imperfection); this is not a mortal; this is but a noble angel.[1] 32 She said: This is he with respect to whom you blamed me, and certainly I sought his yielding himself (to me), but he abstained; and if he does not do what I bid him, he shall be imprisoned, and he shall be of those who are in a state of ignominy. 33 He said: My Lord! the prison house is dearer to me than that to which they invite me; and if Thou turn not away their device from me, I will yearn towards them and become (one) of the ignorant. 34 Thereupon his Lord accepted his prayer and turned away their device from him; for He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 35 Then it occurred to them after they had seen the signs that they should imprison him till a time.[2]

SECTION 5.—**Joseph preaches in the Prison**

36 And two youths entered the prison with him. One of them said: I saw myself pressing wine. And the other said: I saw myself carrying bread on my head, of which birds ate. Inform us of its interpretation; surely we see thee to be of the doers of good. 37 He said: There shall not come to you the food with which you are fed, but I will inform you both of its interpretation before it comes to you; this is of what my Lord has taught me; for I have forsaken the religion of a people who do not believe in God, and they are deniers of the hereafter: 38 And I follow the religion of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; it beseems us not that we should associate aught with God; this is by God's grace upon us and on mankind, but most people do not give thanks: 39 O my two mates of the prison! are sundry lords better, or God the One, the Supreme? 40 You do not serve besides Him but names which you have named, you and your fathers; God has not sent down any authority for them; judgment is only God's; He has commanded that you shall not serve aught but Him; this is the right religion, but most people do not know:[3] 41 O my two mates of

[1] They failed to entice Joseph, and were so impressed by his steadfastness that they called him an angel.

[2] By *signs* are meant arguments of his innocence.

[3] The Holy Prophet was also shut up by his opponents in the Shi'b of Abu Talib for three years, but he did not neglect his mission work even then.

the prison! as for one of you, he shall give his lord to
drink wine; and as for the other, he shall be crucified, so
that the birds shall eat from his head; the matter is
decreed concerning which you inquired. 42 And he
said to him whom he knew would be delivered of the
two, Remember me with thy lord; but the devil caused
him to forget mentioning (it) to his lord, so he remained in
the prison a few years.

SECTION 6.—**Joseph's Interpretation of King's Vision**

43 And the king said: I see seven fat kine which seven
lean ones devoured; and seven green ears and (seven)
others dry; O chiefs! explain to me my dream, if you
can interpret the dream. 44 They said: Confused dreams,
and we do not know the interpretation of dreams. 45 And
of the two (prisoners) he who had found deliverance, and
remembered after a long time, said: I will inform you
of its interpretation, so let me go: 46 Joseph! O truthful
one! explain to us seven fat kine which seven lean ones
devoured, and seven green ears and (seven) others dry,
that I may go back to the people so that they may know.
47 He said: You shall sow for seven years as usual, then
what you reap, leave it in its ear except a little of what
you eat. 48 Then there shall come after that seven
years of hardship which shall eat away all that you have
beforehand laid up in store for them, except a little of
what you shall have preserved. 49 Then there will come
after that a year in which people shall have rain and in
which they shall press (grapes).

SECTION 7.—**Joseph is raised to Eminence**

50 And the king said: Bring him to me. So when
the messenger came to him, he said: Go back to thy
lord and ask him, what is the case of the women who cut
their hands; surely my Lord knows their device. 51 He
said: How was your affair when you sought Joseph to
yield himself (to you)? They said: Remote is God
(from imperfection), we knew of no evil on his part. The
chief's wife said: Now has the truth become manifest;
I sought him to yield himself (to me), and he is surely of
the truthful ones. 52 This is that he might know that I

have not been unfaithful to him in secret and that God does not guide the device of the unfaithful.[1]

PART XIII

53 And I do not declare myself free; surely (man's) self is wont to command (him to do) evil,[2] except such as my Lord has had mercy on, for my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful. 54 And the king said: Bring him to me, I will choose him for myself. So when he had spoken with him, he said: Thou art in our presence to-day an honourable, a faithful one. 55 He said: Place me (in authority) over the treasures of the land; for I am a good keeper, knowing well. 56 And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land—he had mastery in it wherever he liked; We send down Our mercy on whom We please, and We do not waste the reward of the doers of good. 57 And certainly the reward of the hereafter is much better for those who believe and guard (against evil).

SECTION 8.—**Joseph helps his Brothers**

58 And Joseph's brothers came and went in to him, and he knew them, while they did not recognize him. 59 And when he furnished them with their provision, he said: Bring to me a brother of yours from your father; do you not see that I give full measure and that I am the best of hosts? 60 But if you do not bring him to me, you shall have no measure (of corn) from me, nor shall you come near me. 61 They said: We will strive to make his father yield in respect of him, and we are sure to do (it). 62 And he said to his servants: Put their money into their bags that they may recognize it when they go back to their family, so that they may come back. 63 So when they returned to their father, they said: O our father! the measure is withheld from us, therefore send with us our brother, (so that) we may get the measure, and

[1] These are the words of Joseph, who explains his conduct in preferring to remain in prison until his innocence was established.

[2] The *ammárah* is the lowest stage in the spiritual growth of man, and this is the stage spoken of here. The higher stages are the *lawwámah*, when the conscience of man asserts itself and accuses him of the wrong he does, and the *mutma'innah* (lit., *at rest*) which has attained the goal of perfection and in which the inclination to evil is entirely dead.

we will guard him. 64 He said: I cannot trust in you with respect to him, except as I trusted in you with respect to his brother before; but God is the best Keeper, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful ones. 65 And when they opened their goods, they found their money returned to them. They said: O our father! what (more) can we desire? This is our property returned to us, and we will bring corn for our family and guard our brother, and will have in addition the measure of a camel-(load); this is an easy measure. 66 He said: I will by no means send him with you until you give me a firm covenant in God's name that you will bring him back to me, unless you are completely surrounded. And when they gave him their covenant, he said: God is the one in Whom trust is placed as regards what we say. 67 And he said: O my sons! do not (all) enter by one gate and enter by different gates,[1] and I cannot avail you aught against God; judgment is only God's; on Him do I rely, and on Him let those who are reliant rely. 68 And when they had entered as their father had bidden them, it did not avail them aught against God, but (it was only) a desire in the mind of Jacob which he satisfied; and surely he was possessed of knowledge because We had given him knowledge, but most people do not know.

SECTION 9.—**Joseph and his Brothers**

69 And when they went in to Joseph, he lodged his brother with himself, saying: I am thy brother, therefore grieve not at what they do. 70 And when he furnished them with their provisions, (some one) placed the drinking cup in his brother's bag.[2] Then a crier cried out: O caravan! you are thieves. 71 They said while they

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[1] When they went to Egypt the first time, they were suspected as being spies (Gen. 42 : 9); hence Jacob advised them not to enter the city in one party so that they may not be involved in some trouble. Jacob seems to have had some presentiment of ill luck for them this time, and hence he says that he could not avail them aught against God.

[2] Though the Bible narrative ascribes the placing of the cup to Joseph, the Quran does not say so. It is evident that the furnishing of provisions was not done by Joseph himself. It was somebody else who carried out the orders and furnished the provisions. V. 83, in which Jacob accuses his sons of having done some evil this time also, and v. 89, in which Joseph accuses his brothers of having done wrong not only to himself but also to his brother Benjamin, show that it was some one of the brothers who did this by way of mischief, so that Benjamin may be involved in trouble.

were facing them: What is it that you miss? 72 They said: We miss the king's drinking cup, and he who shall bring it shall have a camel-load, and I am responsible for it. 73 They said: By God! you know for certain that we have not come to make mischief in the land, and we are not thieves. 74 They said: But what shall be the requital of this, if you are liars? 75 They said: The requital of this is that the person in whose bag it is found shall himself be (held for) the satisfaction thereof; thus do we punish the wrong-doers. 76 So he began with their sacks before the sack of his brother, then he brought it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for the sake of Joseph; it was not (lawful) that he should take his brother under the king's law unless God pleased; We raise the degrees of whomsoever We please, and above every one possessed of knowledge is the All-knowing one. 77 They said: If he steal, a brother of his did indeed steal before; but Joseph kept it secret in his mind and did not disclose it to them. He said: You are in an evil condition and God knows best what you state. 78 They said: O chief! he has a father, a very old man, therefore retain one of us in his stead; we see thee to be of the doers of good. 79 He said: God protect us that we should seize other than him with whom we found our property, for then surely we would be unjust.

SECTION 10.—**Joseph discloses his Identity**

80 And when they despaired of him, they retired, conferring privately together. The eldest of them said: Do you not know that your father took from you a covenant in God's name, and how you fell short of your duty with respect to Joseph before? Therefore I will by no means depart from this land until my father permit me or God decide for me, and He is the best of the judges: 81 Go back to your father and say: O our father! thy son committed theft, and we do not bear witness except to what we have known, and we could not keep watch over the unseen: 82 And inquire in the town in which we were, and the caravan with which we proceeded, and surely we are truthful. 83 He said: Nay, your souls have made a matter light for you, so patience is good; maybe God

will bring them all together to me; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise. 84 And he turned away from them, and said: O my sorrow for Joseph! and his eyes were filled with tears on account of the grief,[1] then he repressed (the grief). 85 They said: By God! thou wilt not cease to remember Joseph until thou art a prey to constant disease or (until) thou art of those who perish. 86 He said: I only complain of my grief and sorrow to God, and I know from God what you do not know. 87 O my sons! go and inquire respecting Joseph and his brother, and despair not of God's mercy; for none despairs of God's mercy except the unbelieving people.[2] 88 So when they came in to him, they said: O chief! distress has afflicted us and our family and we have brought scanty money, so give us full measure and be charitable to us; God rewards the charitable. 89 He said: Do you know how you treated Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant? 90 They said: Art thou indeed Joseph? He said: I am Joseph and this is my brother; God has indeed been gracious to us; for he who guards (against evil) and is patient—surely God does not waste the reward of those who do good. 91 They said: By God! now has God truly chosen thee over us, and we were sinners. 92 He said: (There shall be) no reproof against you this day;[3] God may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful ones: 93 Take this my shirt and cast it before my father, he will come to know; and come to me with all your families.

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[1] The word *ibyaddat* means originally *it became white*, but the eye usually becomes white when filled with tears, and you say *bayyad-as-siqá*, meaning *he filled the water-skin with water*. Hence, the real significance here is that his eyes were filled with tears. Ibn-i-Abbas is reported to have interpreted these words similarly.

[2] Here again is a lesson which one would in vain seek in the Bible story. It in fact reflects the great certainty of the triumph of the truth which the Holy Prophet had, a certainty never shaken in the least in the face of the greatest trials. "Never despair" is in fact the lesson contained in the story as given in the Holy Quran.

[3] It is related that the Apostle of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, took hold of the two sides of the Kaba on the day of the conquest of Mecca and said to the Quraish: How do you think I will treat you? They said: We hope for good, a noble brother and the son of a noble brother. Then he said: I say as my brother Joseph said: "There shall be no reproof against you this day." This shows how the Holy Prophet regarded the story of Joseph as a prophetic description of the events that were to befall him.

SECTION 11.—Israel goes to Egypt

94 And when the caravan had departed, their father said: I perceive the greatness[1] of Joseph, unless you pronounce me to be weak in judgment. 95 They said: By God! thou art surely in thy old error. 96 So when the bearer of good news came, he cast it before him, and he became certain. He said: Did I not say to you that I know from God what you do not know? 97 They said: O our father! ask forgiveness of our sins for us; surely we were sinners. 98 He said: I will ask for you forgiveness from my Lord; for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. 99 Then when they came in to Joseph, he took his parents[2] to lodge with him and said: Enter safe into Egypt, if God please. 100 And he raised his parents upon the throne[3] and they fell down in prostration on account of him;[4] and he said: O my father! this is the significance of my vision of old;[5] my Lord has indeed made it to be true; and He was indeed kind to me when He brought me forth from the prison and brought you from the desert after the devil had sown dissensions between me and my brothers, for my Lord is Benignant to whom He pleases; surely He is the Knowing, the Wise: 101 My Lord! Thou hast given me of the kingdom and taught me of the interpretation of sayings; Originator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Guardian in this world and the hereafter; make me die in submission (to Thee) and join me with the righteous. 102 This is of the announcements relating to the unseen (which) We

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[1] The original word is *rîh*, which signifies *wind* as well as *predominance* or *power*. Evidently the latter significance fits in with the context.

[2] Leah was Rachel's elder sister and a wife of Jacob (Gen. 29 : 16–28), and she is therefore treated as Joseph's mother.

[3] Joseph's own raised seat is meant here and not the royal throne; or the meaning may be that he placed them in a good position.

[4] It was what may be called a prayer of thanksgiving on account of Joseph, who being thus miraculously saved was raised to such a high dignity. Or, the words may mean, they fell down prostrating themselves before Him, i.e. God.

[5] I.e. his being raised to such a great dignity, not the prostration which had nothing to do with the vision. See v. 6, where Jacob interprets the dream as meaning the completion of blessings on Joseph and the children of Jacob. Raising them to such a high dignity was no doubt a part of the completion of Divine blessings.

reveal to thee, and thou wert not with them when they
resolved upon their affair, and they were devising plans.[1]
103 And most men will not believe though thou desirest
it eagerly. 104 And thou dost not ask them for a reward
for this; it is nothing but a reminder for all mankind.

SECTION 12.—**A Lesson**

105 And how many a sign in the heavens and the earth
which they pass by, yet they turn aside from it. 106 And
most of them do not believe in God except that they set
up others (with Him). 107 Do they feel secure that there
may come to them an extensive chastisement from God
or (that) the hour may come to them suddenly while
they do not perceive? [2] 108 Say: This is my way; I
call to God, I and those who follow me, being certain,
and glory be to God, and I am not one of the polytheists.
109 And We did not send before thee but men from (among)
the people of the towns, to whom We sent revelations.
Have they not travelled in the land and seen what was the
end of those before them? And certainly the abode of
the hereafter is best for those who guard (against evil);
do you not then understand? 110 Until when the
apostles despaired and (the opponents) became sure that
they were told a lie, Our help came to them and
whom We pleased was delivered; and Our punishment
is not averted from the guilty people.[3] 111 In their
histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understand-

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[1] Evidently the subject is transferred to the Holy Prophet's opponents, and it is their plans that are spoken of here; and the announcement relating to the unseen is the news that as Joseph was made great and through him his brothers, so would the Holy Prophet attain to greatness and through him the Arabs who were then bent upon his extirpation. Men like Rodwell and Muir, without giving a thought to this clear significance of the words, make bold to call this "a course of wilful dissimulation and deceit." No dissimulator could stand the hard trials which the Holy Prophet was undergoing at the time.

[2] It is manifestly the hour of their doom, of the complete annihilation of their power.

[3] The personal pronouns, if not rightly understood, quite distort the sense of the passage. The apostles warn their people, but the latter are so stubborn that the apostles at length despair of their people benefiting by the warning. The opponents, on the other hand, become sure, on account of the delay of the punishment, that what the prophets had spoken to them about the warning and the coming of the punishment was a lie. Then it is that the promised help for the prophets and the punishment with which the evil-doers are threatened come to them.

ing. It is not a narrative which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe.

CHAPTER 13

AR-RA'D: THE THUNDER

(*Mecca—6 sections; 43 verses*)

THIS chapter is named the *Thunder* from the analogy of the rain, which is often likened to revelation in the Holy Quran As the rain is a mercy from God, so is revelation, yet as rain is accompanied with thunder and lightning, so revelation is accompanied with warning of punishment, though its real object is to confer benefit. Thus the name of this chapter gives us a hint as to its subject-matter. It has necessarily to deal with the punishment of the offenders, yet punishment must not be mistaken to be the object of revelation.

This chapter, like all other chapters of this group, deals with the truth of the revelation of the Holy Quran. It opens with an assertion as to the truth of Divine revelation, and points to the numerous signs in physical nature which bear witness to its truth; but not satisfied with these signs, the unbelievers demand that the punishment, with which they were threatened as being their ultimate fate, should overtake them. The second section is a reply to this demand, showing that deeds must bring about their consequences. There is a law according to which nations rise and fall, and the fall of idolaters, and the rise of the Muslim nation, were to be brought about in accordance with that law. Here it is that the warning is compared to thunder, revelation being rain, the suggestion being that a demand for punishment is as foolish as a desire to be struck by lightning instead of receiving benefit from the rain. In the third section the unbelievers are told that there is no showing of partiality for one or hatred for another in Divine nature, but that it is in accordance with Divine laws that righteousness should bring its own reward, while continued transgression must be followed by evil consequences. And why should they again and again demand a miracle from without? The real miracles, we are told in the fourth section, are miracles which work within man. The satisfaction which the Holy Book brings to the hearts of the true believers, the great transformation which it was to bring about in the world, the moving away of the great mountains which were obstacles to the spread of truth, and the quickening of those who were dead in spirit, were the real miracles which a heavenly book should work among men; and this is what the Quran was destined to do, and what it had already effected to a remarkable extent. There was no doubt great opposition, and mountains of difficulties had risen to obstruct the spread of truth; but this opposition, we are told in the fifth section, was destined to fail because

truth must spread in the world and prevail over falsehood, and the time must come when the righteous should no more be mocked at, but should prosper, because the prosperity of truth was bound up with their prosperity. The closing section brings in the evidence of the progress of truth, which, however slow, was certainly steady. Unbelief was already at a discount, for while the ranks of the unbelievers continued to be thinned, the number of Muslims was gradually increasing.

There are clear indications in this chapter that its revelation, like the revelation of its six sister chapters, belongs to the time when opposition was at its highest.

SECTION 1.—Signs in Nature

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Knowing, the Seeing. These are the
verses of the Book; and that which is revealed to thee
from thy Lord is the truth, but most people do not believe.
2 God is He who raised the heavens without any pillars
that you see, and He holds control on the throne, and He
made the sun and the moon subservient (to you); each one
pursues its course to an appointed time; He regulates the
affair, making clear the signs that you may be certain of
meeting your Lord. 3 And He it is Who spread the earth
and made in it firm mountains and rivers, and of all fruits
He has made in it two kinds; He makes the night cover
the day; surely there are signs in this for a people who
reflect. 4 And in the earth there are tracts side by side
and gardens of grapes and corn and palm-trees having
one root and (others) having distinct roots—they are
watered with one water, and We make some of them to
excel others in fruit; surely there are signs in this for a
people who understand. 5 And if thou wouldst wonder,
then wondrous is their saying: What! when we are
dust, shall we then be in a new creation? These are
they who disbelieve in their Lord, and these have chains
on their necks, and they are the inmates of the fire; in
it they shall abide.[1] 6 And they ask thee to hasten on
the evil before the good, and indeed there have been exem-
plary punishments before them; and surely thy Lord is
the Lord of forgiveness to people, notwithstanding their
injustice; and thy Lord is severe in requiting (evil).

[1] The chains spoken of here are the chains which keep them constrained to evil usages and wicked courses.

7 And those who disbelieve say: Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord? Thou art only a warner and a guide for every people.[1]

SECTION 2.— Consequences of Deeds

8 God knows what every female bears, and that of which the wombs fall short of completion and that in which they increase; and there is a measure with Him of everything.[2]
9 The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Great, the Most High. 10 Alike (to Him) among you is he who conceals (his) words and he who speaks them openly, and he who hides himself by night and (who) goes forth by day. 11 There are (angels) following him closely, before him and behind him, who guard him by God's command.[3] Surely God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition; and when God intends evil to a people, there is no averting it, and besides Him they have no protector. 12 He it is Who shows you the lightning causing fear and hope and (Who) brings up the heavy cloud. 13 And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him; and He sends the thunderbolts and smites with them whom He pleases, yet they dispute concerning God, and He is mighty in prowess. 14 To Him is due the true prayer; and those whom they pray to besides God give them no answer, but (they are) like one who stretches forth his two hands towards water that it may reach his mouth, but it will not reach it; and the prayer of the unbelievers is only lost. 15 And whoever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to God only, willingly

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[1] I.e. all nations of the world will now find guidance through the Holy Prophet. But the words may also carry the significance that there has been a guide for every people.

[2] The consequences of deeds are compared to gestation. The verses that follow make it clear.

[3] See 82 : 10, etc. The guardian angels are the angels which guard man's deeds, so that every deed that man does has a consequence, though that consequence may be hidden for a while from the doer's eye, that being the reason that it is compared to gestation in v. 8. Every action is recorded by the effect that it produces. It should be noted that here the individual himself is spoken of as being followed and guarded, while elsewhere his deeds are spoken of as being guarded; see 17 : 13, 82 : 10–12. The conclusion is evident that man's deeds are guarded by the effect which they produce upon him.

and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve.[1]
16 Say: Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?
Say: God. Say: Do you then take besides Him guardians
who do not control any profit or harm for themselves?
Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Or can the
darkness and the light be equal? Or have they set up
with God associates who have created creation like His,
so that what is created became confused to them? Say:
God is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the
Supreme.[2] 17 He sends down water from the cloud, then
water-courses flow (with water) according to their measure,
and the torrent bears along the swelling foam, and from
what they melt in the fire for the sake of making ornaments
or apparatus arises a scum like it; thus does God compare
truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away
as a worthless thing; and as for that which profits the
people, it tarries in the earth; thus does God set forth
parables.[3] 18 For those who respond to their Lord is
good; and those who do not respond to Him, had they
all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it, they
would certainly offer it for a ransom. These—an evil
reckoning shall be theirs and their abode is hell, and evil
is the resting-place.

SECTION 3.—Law of Requital

19 Is he who knows that what has been revealed to
thee from thy Lord is the truth like him who is blind?
Only those possessed of understanding do mind, 20 Those
who fulfil the promise of God and do not break the covenant,
21 And those who join that which God has bidden to be

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[1] I.e. all things submit to Divine law and must obey it. The reference in shadows is again to man's deeds. He is no doubt given a choice to do good or evil, but even if he does evil, he must submit to the Divine law and must suffer the consequences of his evil deeds.

[2] The verse lays down the principle in the most clear and emphatic words that all creation has been brought into existence solely by God, and that those who are taken as gods (Christ being one of them) have not created anything.

[3] The parable set forth here signifies that the Holy Prophet and his followers, being meant for the good of mankind, will live and prosper; while those who have made themselves worthless must pass away. The law is, however, stated in general terms that that which profits the people tarries in the earth; in other words, it is through the service of humanity that a nation can prolong its life.

joined and have awe of their Lord and fear the evil reckon-
ing, 22 And those who are constant, seeking the pleasure
of their Lord, and keep up prayer and spend out of what
We have given them, secretly and openly, and repel evil
with good[1]—as for these, they shall have the (happy)
issue of the abode, 23 The gardens of perpetual abode
which they will enter along with those who do good from
among their parents and their spouses and their offspring;
and the angels will enter in upon them from every gate:
24 Peace be on you because you were constant; how
excellent is then the issue of the abode. 25 And those who
break the covenant of God after its confirmation and cut
asunder that which God has ordered to be joined and
make mischief in the land—upon them shall be curse and
they shall have the evil (issue) of the abode. 26 God
amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom
He pleases; and they rejoice in this world's life, and this
world's life is nothing compared with the hereafter but a
temporary enjoyment.

SECTION 4.—**Miracle of the Quran**

27 And those who disbelieve say: Why is not a sign
sent down to him by his Lord?[2] Say: God leaves in
error whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who
turn (to Him), 28 Those who believe and whose hearts
are set at rest by the remembrance of God; now surely
by God's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. 29 Those
who believe and do good—a good final state shall be
theirs and a goodly return. 30 And thus We have sent
thee among a nation before which other nations have
passed away, that thou mightest recite to them what We

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[1] This passage lays down the noble doctrine of *repelling evil with good.* The Quran improves upon the Christian doctrine of *good for evil*, making it practicable, so that its observance in Islam does not interfere with law and order, whereas the Gospel doctrine, owing to its impracticability, has not been observed to this day. *Evil* is a thing which is by all means to be *repelled*, and hence *good for evil* is recommended only in cases when *evil* would be *repelled* by that good. A society which unconditionally requited evil with good would abolish all safeguards; evil-doers who received nothing but good for every evil they committed would assuredly establish a condition of anarchy by their evil deeds. In a similar strain the Quran says elsewhere, *he who forgives and amends thereby* (42 : 40).

[2] The answer to this question is given in the concluding words of the section.

have revealed to thee and (still) they deny the Beneficent
God. Say: He is my Lord, there is no god but He; on
Him do I rely and to Him is my return. 31 And even
if there were a Quran with which the mountains were made
to pass away, or the earth were travelled over with it, or
the dead were made to speak thereby—nay! the command-
ment is wholly God's.[1] Have not yet those who believe
known that if God please He would guide all the people?
And those who disbelieve—there will not cease to afflict
them because of what they do a repelling calamity, or
it will alight close by their abodes, until the promise of
God comes about;[2] surely God will not fail in (His)
promise.

SECTION 5.—Opposition shall fail

32 And apostles before thee were certainly mocked at,
but I gave respite to those who disbelieved, then I over-
took them; how then was My requital (of evil)? 33 Is
He who watches every soul as to what it earns (like him
who is powerless)? And yet they give associates to
God! Say: Give them a name;[3] nay, do you mean to
inform Him of what He does not know in the earth, or
(do you affirm this) by an outward saying? Rather, their
plans are made to appear fairseeming to those who dis-
believe, and they are kept back from the path; and whom
God leaves in error, he shall have no guide. 34 They
shall have chastisement in this world's life, and the chas-
tisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and
they shall have no protector against God. 35 A likeness

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[1] That the Quran should work great wonders is not here treated as an impossibility, but rather as a very near probability, for it is immediately followed by the words *the commandment is wholly God's*, which is equivalent to saying that He is by no means unable to do it, and that His commandment will soon be established, by which is meant the establishment of the superiority of Islam. The "mountains," by which are meant the chief opponents of the Holy Prophet in the spread of Islam, were made to pass away; it soon spread in distant countries, and the dead were no doubt made to speak, for the whole of Arabia, which was quite dead, resounded with the proclamations of the Unity of God. That by the *mountains* are to be understood *great men* is sufficiently clear from what is said in the Qamus, which explains the word *jabal* as meaning *the chief of a people and their most learned man*.

[2] The promise of God relates to the complete annihilation of the power of the opponents.

[3] As if it were said that they are not worthy of a name. Or the meaning may be, give them a name expressing any qualification of godhead.

of the garden which the righteous are promised:[1] there flow in it rivers; its fruit is perpetual and its shade; this is the requital of those who guarded (against evil), and the requital of the unbelievers is the fire.
36 And those to whom We have given the Book rejoice in that which has been revealed to thee, and of the confederates are some who deny a part of it. Say: I am only commanded that I should serve God and not associate anything with Him; to Him do I invite (you) and to Him is my return.
37 And thus have We revealed it, a true judgment in Arabic, and if thou follow their low desires after what has come to thee of knowledge, thou shalt not have against God any guardian or a protector.

SECTION 6.—**Steady Progress of Truth**

38 And We sent apostles before thee and gave them wives and children; and it is not in (the power of) an apostle to bring a sign except by God's permission; for every term there is an appointment.
39 God makes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book.[2]
40 And We will either let thee see part of what We threaten them with or cause thee to die, for only the delivery of the message is (incumbent) on thee while calling (them) to account is Our (business).
41 Do they not see that We are coming on the land by curtailing it of its sides?[3] And God pronounces a doom—there is no repeller of His decree, and He is swift to take account.
42 And those before them did indeed make plans, but all planning is (in) God's (control); He knows what every soul earns, and the

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[1] It should be noted that the paradise mentioned here is called only a likeness, as also in 47 : 15. The reason is, as a saying of the Holy Prophet makes it clear, that the blessings of paradise are such as no eye has seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them.

[2] Here the Divine ordinance to annihilate the power of the opponents of the Holy Prophet and to bring about the predominance of Islam is called the *basis of the Book*, because the final vanquishment of the powers of evil, which was previously foretold, would be such a clear sign that all doubts and difficulties would be solved by reference to this plain proof. See 3 : 6.

[3] The reference is to the diminution of the number of unbelievers, both high and low (as *atráf* signifies) by men daily leaving their ranks and joining the ranks of Islam.

unbelievers shall come to know for whom is the (better)
issue of the abode. 43 And those who disbelieve say:
Thou art not a messenger. Say: God is sufficient as a
witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge
of the Book.

CHAPTER 14

ABRAHAM

(Mecca—7 sections; 52 verses)

THE name of this chapter is taken from Abraham, whose prayer is mentioned in the sixth section. As this prayer speaks of the settling of Ishmael in the wilderness of Paran, the mention of it is meant to be a reminder to the Arabs of the truth of the Holy Prophet.

The chapter opens with the statement that the Quran is revealed that men may thereby be taken out of darkness and led into light, and goes on to show that the Mosaic revelation, although given with a similar object, was for a particular people. The second section shows that Moses also exhorted his people to accept the truth, but that all prophets had their message rejected at first. The third section maintains that in all cases opposition was at last destroyed: the Divine promise of help to the prophet being brought to fulfilment and his powerful opponents rendered helpless. That truth is confirmed as the natural sequel is affirmed in the next section, and this is followed by one which shows that by rejecting truth man leads up to his own ruin, for everything is made subservient to man, thus establishing the grand truth of Divine Unity. Here follows Abraham's prayer expressing his disavowal of polytheism of every sort, with special reference to his descendants through Ishmael, for whom he also prayed. In the concluding section we are told that the end of opposition to truth has always been and shall always be failure.

The date of its revelation seems to be nearer to the Flight than that of the other chapters of this group.

SECTION 1.—Revelation dispels Darkness

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Seeing. (This is) a Book which We
have revealed to thee that thou mayest bring forth men,
by their Lord's permission, from darkness into light—to
the way of the Mighty, the Praised One, 2 (Of) God,
Whose is whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in
the earth; and woe to the unbelievers on account of the
severe chastisement, 3 (To) those who love this world's

life more than the hereafter, and turn away from God's path and desire to make it crooked; these are in a great error. 4 And We did not send any apostle but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly;[1] then God leaves whom He pleases in error and He guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. 5 And We sent Moses with Our communications, saying: Bring forth thy people from darkness into light and remind them of the days of God;[2] surely there are signs in this for every patient, grateful one. 6 And when Moses said to his people: Call to mind God's favour to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to severe torment, and slew your sons and spared your women; and in this there was a great trial from your Lord.

SECTION 2.—**Truth is rejected first**

7 And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe. 8 And Moses said: If you are ungrateful, you and those on earth all together, surely God is Self-sufficient, Praised. 9 Has not the account reached you of those before you, of the people of Noah and Ad and Samood, and those after them? None knows them but God. Their apostles came to them with clear arguments, but they thrust their hands into their mouths and said: We deny that with which you are sent, and we are in serious doubt as to that to which you invite us. 10 Their apostles said: Is there doubt about God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth? He invites you to forgive you your faults and to respite you till an appointed term. They said: You are nothing but mortals like us; you wish to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship; so bring us some clear authority. 11 Their apostles said to them: We are

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[1] The Arabs were no doubt the Holy Prophet's people, but this message was not limited to them. He came from among the Arabs, but his message was for the whole of humanity; see 7:158, 34:28, etc.

[2] In Arabic literature, *Ayyám ul 'Arab*, or *the days of the Arabs*, is used for the *conflicts of the Arabs*. Hence, as a conflict is a source of blessings for the conqueror and a source of distress for the vanquished, the *days of God* signify *His merciful dealings with the righteous and His punishment of the wicked*

nothing but mortals like yourselves, but God bestows (His) favours on whom He pleases of His servants, and it is not for us that we should bring you an authority except by God's permission and on God should the believers rely.
12 And what reason have we that we should not rely on God and He has indeed guided us in our ways? And we would bear with patience your persecution of us; and on God should the reliant rely.

SECTION 3.—**Opposition is destroyed**

13 And those who disbelieved said to their apostles: We will drive you forth from our land, or else you shall come back into our religion. And their Lord revealed to them: Certainly We will destroy the unjust:
14 And We will settle you in the land after them;[1] this is for him who fears standing in My presence and who fears My threat.
15 And they asked for judgment and every insolent opposer was disappointed;
16 Hell is before him and he shall be given to drink of hot water;
17 He will drink it little by little and will not be able to swallow it agreeably, and death will come to him from every quarter, but he shall not die; and there shall be vehement chastisement before him.
18 The parable of those who disbelieve in their Lord: their actions are like ashes on which the wind blows hard on a stormy day; they shall not have power over any thing out of what they have earned; this is the great error.
19 Dost thou not see that God created the heavens and the earth with truth? If He please He will take you away and bring a new creation,
20 And this is not difficult for God.
21 And they shall all come forth before God, then the weak shall say to those who were proud: We were your followers; can you therefore avert from us any part of the chastisement of God? They would say: If God had guided us, we too would have guided you; it is the same to us whether we are impatient (now) or patient, there is no place for us to fly to.

[1] The prophecy of the final triumph of the Holy Prophet and of the utter discomfiture and overthrow of the power of his opponents is of very frequent occurrence in the Holy Quran, and here it is expressed in the clearest words. The opponents are told that they may expel the Prophet, but there was not the least doubt that he would ultimately come back as a conqueror, and be made ruler in the land after their power was crushed.

SECTION 4.—Truth is confirmed

22 And the devil shall say after the affair is decided: God indeed promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises then failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you,[1] except that I called you and you obeyed me, therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves; I cannot be your aider (now) nor can you be my aiders; I disbelieved on account of your associating me with God before; surely the unjust shall have the painful chastisement. 23 And those who believe and do good are made to enter gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them by their Lord's permission; their greeting therein is, Peace. 24 Hast thou not considered how God sets forth a parable of a good word (being) like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven,[2] 25 Yielding its fruit in every season by the permission of its Lord? And God sets forth parables for men that they may be mindful. 26 And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability.[3] 27 God confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and God leaves the unjust in error, and God does what He pleases.[4]

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[1] It should be noted that here the devil is made to deny having any authority, even over the evil-doers, and therefore no one is compelled towards an evil course.

[2] The parable likening a good word to a good tree follows immediately a description of the final abode of those who do good, which is repeatedly described in the Holy Quran as being a garden or gardens in which rivers flow. This gives us a clue to the real nature of the paradise of Islam. A good word is like a good tree which gives its fruit in every season, and therefore the fruits which a man shall find in paradise, ever ready and within his reach, are no other than the fruits of his own good deeds, and the trees of paradise are in fact man's own good deeds which have grown into trees, bearing a fruit which is an embodiment of the spiritual fruits of the good deeds of this life. It should also be noted that as good deeds are likened to fruit-bearing trees, faith is likened to water repeatedly in the Holy Quran, being the source of physical life. It is for this reason that, just as the righteous are always spoken of as being those who *believe* and *do good*, paradise is always described as being a *garden* in which *rivers* flow, the *rivers* corresponding to *faith* and the *trees* of the garden corresponding to the good which a man does.

[3] The evil deed is likened to a tree whose roots do not go down into the earth, and in whose case, therefore, the process of nutrition must stop. Therefore an evil deed does not prosper and cannot bear any fruit.

[4] Note that God does what He pleases, yet it is only the *unjust whom He is pleased* to leave in error.

SECTION 5.—**Man's Injustice**

28 Hast thou not seen those who have changed God's favour for unbelief [1] and made their people to alight into the abode of perdition, 29 (Into) hell? They shall enter it, and an evil place it is to settle in. 30 And they set up equals with God that they may lead (people) astray from His path. Say: Enjoy yourselves, for surely your return is to the fire. 31 Say to My servants who believe that they should keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them secretly and openly before the coming of the day in which there shall be no bartering, nor mutual befriending. 32 God is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you, and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. 33 And He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. 34 And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count God's favours, you will not be able to number them; surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful.

SECTION 6.—**Abraham's Prayer**

35 And when Abraham said: My Lord! make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols: 36 My Lord! they have led many men astray; so whoever follows me, he is of me; and whoever disobeys me, Thou surely art Forgiving, Merciful: 37 O our Lord! I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House,[2] our Lord! that they may keep up prayer; therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they may be grateful: 38 O our Lord! Thou knowest what we hide and what we make

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[1] That is, they have rejected the revelation of the Holy Prophet, which aimed at making them a great and exalted people, and adopted unbelief in its place.

[2] That is, Ishmael and his descendants. Both according to oral Arab tradition and the Bible, Ishmael's descendants were settled in Arabia.

public, and nothing in the earth nor any thing in heaven
is hidden from God: 39 Praise be to God Who has given
me in old age Ishmael and Isaac; surely my Lord is the
Hearer of prayer: 40 My Lord! make me keep up prayer
and from my offspring (too), O our Lord, and accept
my prayer: 41 O our Lord! grant protection to me and
my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning
shall come to pass.

SECTION 7.—**End of Opposition**

42 And do not think God to be heedless of what the
unjust do; He only respites them to a day on which the
eyes shall be fixedly open, 43 Hastening forward, their
heads upraised, their eyes not reverting to them and their
hearts vacant. 44 And warn people of the day when
the chastisement shall come to them, then those who were
unjust will say: O our Lord! respite us to a near term,
(so) we shall respond to Thy call and follow the apostles.
What! did you not swear, before, (that) there will be no
passing away for you! 45 And you dwell in the abodes
of those who were unjust to themselves, and it is clear
to you how We dealt with them and We have set forth
parables to you. 46 And they have indeed planned their
plan, and their plan is with God,[1] though their plan was
such that the mountains should pass away thereby.
47 So do not think God (to be one) failing in His promise
to His apostles; for God is Mighty, the Lord of retribu-
tion. 48 On the day when the earth shall be changed into
a different earth, and the heavens (as well),[2] and they

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[1] I.e. it is controlled by Him, so that they will not be able to achieve by their plans what they aim at. This reference to the Meccan's mighty plans clearly shows that these verses were revealed about the close of the Meccan period.

[2] The transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet no doubt changed the earth into a different earth and the heaven into a new heaven. The Arabia at the birth of the Holy Prophet was not the Arabia at his death. Beliefs, usages, and practices, which had baffled all attempts at reformation for centuries, were swept away, and the ignorant, superstitious, and warring tribes had given place to a single nation, holding aloft the torch of knowledge and civilization to the whole world. Idolatry was blotted out of existence so completely that no vestige of it could be found among a people who had remained addicted to it for centuries. The verse no doubt speaks of the Resurrection, but it equally suggests in prophetic language the smaller resurrection brought about by the adv nt of the Holy Prophet in this very life.

shall come forth before God, the One, the Supreme.
49 And thou wilt see the guilty on that day linked together
in chains, 50 Their shirts made of pitch, and the fire
covering their faces, 51 That God may requite each soul
(according to) what it has earned ; surely God is swift in
reckoning. 52 This is a sufficient exposition for the
people and that they may be warned thereby, and that
they may know that He is One God and that those
possessed of understanding may mind.

CHAPTER 15

AL-HIJR

(*Mecca*—6 *sections ;* 99 *verses*)

THIS chapter is named *Al-Hijr*, a territory to the north of Medina, where flourished Samood, whose fate is mentioned as a warning to those who contemplated the slaying of the Holy Prophet. While promising a complete protection for the message of truth contained in the Holy Quran against all evil designs, it intensifies the warning contained in the previous chapters against those who were bent on its destruction.

The last chapter closed by warning the opponents of the end which they were destined to meet if they did not abstain from persecuting the truth. The same subject is continued in the beginning of this chapter, because the Quran, which was meant for the welfare of humanity, must be guarded against all evil intentions. Thus it is in the very first section that the grand promise is expressly given that the Quran shall for ever be guarded against all corruption, and, of course, against all attempts to annihilate it. In the next section we are told that all things are controlled by God, so that the mischief-makers cannot inflict any injury on the elect, and the signs of the triumph of truth could already be witnessed. In the third section it is stated that the devil has always been opposing the righteous servants, yet his opposition is devoid of harm. The next, while promising mercy for the righteous, refers to an incident in Abraham's history as to how he was given the good news of the birth of a son through whom a great nation was to be blessed. The same messengers also bore to him the news that Lot's people were about to be destroyed because of their great iniquities. The fifth section, therefore, speaks of the punishment of the guilty people who would not listen to Lot, closing with a reference to Shuaib, also a descendant of Abraham. The Arabs, however, are warned of the fate of a people nearer home, the Samood, who dwelt in rocks, and they are told that, all-important as the message of the Quran was, their mockery and opposition would not go unpunished.

The date of the revelation of this chapter is generally regarded to be earlier than that of the other chapters of this group.

SECTION 1.—**Protection of the Quran**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the Seeing. These are the verses of the Book and (of) a Quran that makes manifest.

PART XIV

2 Often will those who disbelieve wish that they had
been Muslims. 3 Leave them that they may eat and
enjoy themselves and (that) hope may beguile them, for
they will soon know. 4 And never did We destroy a
town but it had a term made known. 5 No people can
hasten on their doom nor can they postpone (it). 6 And
they say: O thou to whom the Reminder has been revealed!
thou art surely insane: 7 Why dost thou not bring to
us the angels if thou art of the truthful ones? 8 We do
not send the angels but with truth, and then they would
not be respited. 9 We have revealed the Reminder and
We will surely be its guardian.[1] 10 And We sent (apostles)
before thee among the sects of yore. 11 And there never
came an apostle to them but they mocked him. 12 Thus
do We make it to enter into the hearts of the guilty,
13 They do not believe in it, and indeed the example of
the former people has already passed. 14 And even if
We open to them a gateway of the heaven, so that they
ascend into it all the while, 15 They would say: Only
our eyes have been covered over, rather we are an enchanted
people.

SECTION 2.—**God's Control**

16 And certainly We have made strongholds in the heaven and We have made it fairseeming to the beholders,

[1] The wonderfully clear fulfilment of this prophecy is so evident a fact that a hostile writer like Muir is compelled to admit that "there is probably in the world no other book which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text." The recent attempt of Dr. Mingana to prove alterations in the text of the Holy Quran has resulted in miserable failure, and his discovery has rather set the question at rest, because it was apparently the most powerful attack made on the purity of the text of the Holy Quran during the thirteen centuries that it has been in existence. During the whole length and breadth of the Islamic world there does not exist a single copy with any variations from the recognized text, and thus not only was the Quran preserved from destruction against a powerful enemy, but it has also been preserved from corruption, and in this respect it stands unique among the revealed books.

17 And We guard it against every accursed devil; 18 But
he who steals a hearing, so there follows him a visible
flame.[1] 19 And the earth—We have spread it forth and
made in it firm mountains and caused to grow in it of
every suitable thing. 20 And We have made in it means
of subsistence for you and for him for whom you are not
the suppliers. 21 And there is not a thing but with Us
are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but
in a known measure. 22 And We send the winds ferti-
lizing, then send down water from the cloud so We give
it to you to drink of, nor is it you who store it up. 23 And
surely We bring to life and cause to die and We are the
heirs.[2] 24 And surely We know those of you who have
gone before and We certainly know those who come later.
25 And thy Lord will gather them together; He is Wise,
Knowing.

SECTION 3.—Devil's Opposition

26 And certainly We created man of dried clay, of
black mud fashioned in shape.[3] 27 And the jinn We
created before of intensely hot fire. 28 And when thy
Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a mortal

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[1] The three verses speak of the soothsayers and the diviners, who were among the opponents of the Holy Prophet. They pretended to receive communications from on high, but they were really driven away from the Divine presence, and therefore could not have any access to that source of purity. In speaking of the divinations as being followed by a visible flame, it is indicated that they meet with failure and disappointment. The description of spiritual truths in words relating to physical laws prevailing in the world is of common occurrence in the Holy Quran.

[2] *Wáris* means an *heir*, and therefore *one who remains after another has perished*. The announcement made here is a prophecy that the true worshippers of God shall be heirs in the land while the others shall perish.

[3] This is a reference to the origin of life. Man's creation from *tin* or dust is frequently spoken of in the Holy Quran. Here the *tin* is called *salsál* or dried clay, while in 55 : 14 it is called "*the like of fakhkhár*," i.e. what is baked in fire. This no doubt refers to the first stage when the crust of the earth was formed, the fire being cooled. Then the *salsál* or dried clay became *hama* or black mud, in which state it became fit for the growth of life, and the last state was the fashioning of the dust into shape, which clearly signifies the evolution of higher life. The reference to the creation of *jinn* from intensely hot fire in the next verse supports the above conclusion, because the earth was, before the formation of its crust, undoubtedly a flame of fire, and the jinn were probably a creation fit for the fiery state of the earth. But it may be added that the description of the creation of *men* and *jinn* from *dust* and *fire* respectively is also an allegorical description of the nature of those who are submissive to Divine laws and those who rebel against them, and the allegory is carried on further in what is stated of the rebellion of the devil against Adam.

of dried clay, of black mud fashioned in shape. 29 And
when I have made him complete and breathed into him
of My spirit,[1] fall down making obeisance to him. 30 So
the angels made obeisance, all of them together, 31 But
Iblis (did it not); he refused to be with those who made
obeisance. 32 He said: O Iblis! what excuse hast thou
that thou art not with those who make obeisance? 33 He
said: I am not such that I should make obeisance to a
mortal whom Thou hast created of dried clay, of black
mud fashioned in shape. 34 He said: Then get out of
it, for surely thou art driven away: 35 And on thee is
curse until the day of judgment. 36 He said: My Lord!
respite me till the time when they are raised.[2] 37 He
said: Thou art of the respited ones, 38 Till the period
of the time made known. 39 He said: My Lord! because
Thou hast judged me as deviating, I will surely make
(evil) fairseeming to them on earth, and I will cause them
all to deviate, 40 Except Thy servants from among them,
the purified ones. 41 He said: This is a right way with
Me: 42 As regards My servants, thou hast no authority
over them[3] except those who follow thee of the deviators.
43 And surely Hell is the promised place of them all.
44 It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a
separate party of them.[4]

SECTION 4.—**Abraham**

45 The righteous shall be in the midst of gardens and
fountains: 46 Enter them in peace, secure. 47 And We
will root out whatever of rancour is in their breasts—(they
shall be) as brethren, on raised couches, face to face.

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[1] The spirit of God is the *nafs-i-nátiqah*, or the discretion which gives superiority to man over the whole creation.

[2] When a man is raised to life spiritually, the suggestions and the promptings of the devil cease to affect him.

[3] The devil has no authority over any man, but those who deviate follow him of their own accord.

[4] Hell is mentioned by seven different names in the Holy Quran: (1) *jahannam*, or *hell*; (2) *lazá*, or *the flaming fire* (70:15); (3) *hutamah*, or *the crushing disaster* (104:4); (4) *sa'ír*, or *the burning fire* (22:4); (5) *saqar*, or *the scorching fire* (54:48); (6) *jahím*, or *the fierce fire* (2:119); (7) *háwiyah*, or *the abyss* (101:9). The seven gates mean the seven ways which lead into it, according to which there are seven different names. But note that the numeral *seven* in Arabic often stands for a large number, so that the meaning is that there are many gates or many ways leading to it.

48 Toil shall not afflict them in it, nor shall they be ever
ejected from it.[1] 49 Inform My servants that I am the
Forgiving, the Merciful, 50 And that My chastisement
—that is the painful chastisement. 51 And inform them
of the guests of Abraham. 52 When they entered upon
him, they said, Peace. He said: We are afraid of you.
53 They said: Be not afraid; we give thee the good news
of a boy, possessing knowledge. 54 He said: Do you
give me good news (of a son) when old age has come upon
me ?—Of what then do you give me good news? 55 They
said: We give thee good news with truth, therefore be
not of the despairing. 56 He said: And who despairs of
the mercy of his Lord but the erring ones? 57 He said:
What is your business, then, O messengers? 58 They
said: We are sent towards a guilty people, 59 Except
Lot's followers—We will surely deliver them all, 60 Ex-
cept his wife; We ordained that she shall be of those who
remain behind.

SECTION 5.—**Lot and Shuaib**

61 And when the messengers came to Lot's followers,
62 He said: You are an unknown people. 63 They said:
Nay, we have come to thee with that about which they
disputed: 64 And we have come to thee with the truth,
and we are surely truthful: 65 Therefore go forth with
thy followers in a part of the night and thyself follow their
rear, and let not any one of you turn round, and go forth
whither you are commanded. 66 And We revealed to
him this decree that the roots of these shall be cut off in
the morning. 67 And the people of the town came re-
joicing. 68 He said: These are my guests, therefore do
not disgrace me, 69 And guard against (the punishment
of) God and do not put me to shame. 70 They said:
Have we not forbidden thee from (other) people? 71 He
said: These are my daughters, if you will do (aught).[2]

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[1] Such is the Muslim paradise. There is absolute peace of mind, perfect security from any inclination to evil or any other danger (v. 46); there is a brotherhood in which no one conceals any rancour in his heart for his brother, nor has any one a complaint against another (v. 47); and lastly, there is neither toil nor fatigue, nor is one to be ever deprived of that state of perfect bliss (v. 48).

[2] He offered his daughters as hostages, as a guarantee that the strangers would not make any mischief.

72 By thy life! they were blindly wandering on in their
frenzy. 73 So the rumbling overtook them (while) enter-
ing upon the time of sunrise; 74 Thus did We turn it
upside down, and rained down upon them stones of what
had been decreed. 75 Surely in this are signs for those
who examine. 76 And it is on a road that still abides.
77 Certainly, there is a sign in this for the believers.
78 And the dwellers of the thicket also were unjust;[1]
79 So We inflicted retribution on them, and they are both
on an open road (still) pursued.[2]

SECTION 6.—A Warning

80 And the dwellers of Al-Hijr rejected the messengers;[3]
81 And We gave them Our communications, but they
turned aside from them; 82 And they hewed houses
in the mountains in security. 83 So the rumbling over-
took them in the morning; 84 And what they earned
did not avail them. 85 And We did not create the heavens
and the earth and what is between them but in truth.
And the hour is surely coming, so turn away with kindly
forgiveness.[4] 86 Thy Lord is the Creator of all things,
the Knowing. 87 And truly We have given thee seven
of the oft-repeated (verses) and the grand Quran.[5] 88 Do
not strain thy eyes after what We have given certain
classes of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and
make thyself gentle to the believers. 89 And say: I am
the plain warner. 90 Like as We sent down on the
obstructors, 91 Those who declared the Quran to be a
lie. 92 So, by thy Lord, We would certainly question
them all 93 As to what they did. 94 Therefore declare
openly what thou art bidden, and turn aside from the
polytheists. 95 We will suffice thee against the scoffers,
96 Those who set up another god with God, so they shall

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[1] *The dwellers of the thicket* were Shuaib's people.

[2] By *both* are meant the cities of the people of Lot as well as those of Shuaib's people. The road alluded to is the road followed by caravans from Hijaz to Syria.

[3] *Al-Hijr* is the territory situated to the north of Medina, where Samood lived.

[4] The *hour* is the doom of the Holy Prophet's opponents.

[5] The oft-repeated verses are the seven verses of the opening chapter of the Holy Quran which are repeated in prayer daily by every Muslim.

soon know. 97 And surely We know that thy breast
straitens at what they say. 98 Therefore celebrate the
praise of thy Lord, and be of those who make obeisance;
99 And serve thy Lord until there comes to thee that
which is certain.[1]

CHAPTER 16

AN-NAHL: THE BEE

(*Mecca*—16 *sections*; 128 *verses*)

THIS chapter is very appropriately named *An-Nahl*, or the *Bee*, because the bee, guided by instinct, which is called a revelation in its case (v. 68), gathers together sweet honey from flowers of all kinds, taking what is best in them, thus producing "a beverage of many colours in which there is healing for men"; so Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet collected what was best in the teachings of all the prophets and presented it in the Holy Quran, which is also declared to be *a healing* (10 : 57) for the spiritual diseases of men.

The subject-matter of this chapter is the same as that of the preceding six chapters of the *alif, lám, rá* group, to which it really forms, as it were, a supplement, establishing the truth of the Quranic revelation by inferences drawn from the analogy of Divine work in creation, and showing the truth of Divine Unity by similar inferences.

A warning was given to the opponents of the Quran at the close of the last chapter, and the approach of the doom is here announced. Then it is shown by reference to the great Divine gifts for the physical welfare of man that such a beneficent Master could not have neglected his spiritual welfare. The second section, still dwelling upon the benefits which the Divine hand has conferred upon man in physical nature, draws attention to man's superiority over the whole of creation, which is made subservient to him. It thus appeals to man's self-esteem, admonishing him not to bow before the created things which he has, indeed, been created to rule. The next two sections lead us again into the domain of prophecy by stating that the deniers shall come to disgrace. The fifth section deals with the false excuses of the polytheists and shows that a prophet is raised to explain, while the sixth deals with the punishment of those who try to destroy truth. The seventh section shows how human nature revolts against polytheism, and the eighth establishes the need of the revelation of the Holy Quran. The ninth cites parables dealing with the need of revelation; and the tenth shows that all men cannot be the recipients of that revelation, but that choice is made of the best. The eleventh again refers to the physical blessings which God has bestowed on man. The twelfth section refers to the evidence of prophets against their

[1] *That which is certain*, is here generally understood to mean *death*, because it is the one thing which is certain to come to every creature.

people, the thirteenth shows that it is nothing but good that is enjoined by revelation, and thus appeals to human instinct not to reject it. The Quran is next plainly stated to be a revelation in substitution for the former revelations, and not to be the work of a man. The fate of the Meccans, who still persisted in rejecting its Divine truth, is then compared to that of a flourishing town which must be made to suffer fear and hunger because of the ingratitude of its people. And now that the enemy is punished on account of transgression and his power broken, the chapter is closed by giving the Muslims certain directions regarding the carrying on of controversy with the non-Muslims and their dealings with them when they have the power to punish them.

SECTION 1.—**Revelation testified to by Nature**

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 God's commandment has come, therefore do not
desire to hasten it. Glory be to Him, and highly exalted
be He above what they set up (with Him). 2 He sends
down the angels with the inspiration by His commandment
on whom He pleases of His servants, saying: Give the
warning that there is no god but Me, therefore be careful
(of your duty) to Me. 3 He created the heavens and the
earth with the truth. Highly exalted be He above what
they associate (with Him). 4 He created man from a small
life-germ, and lo! he is an open contender. 5 And He
created the cattle for you; you have in them warm clothing
and (many) advantages, and of them do you eat. 6 And
there is beauty in them for you when you drive them back
(to home), and when you send them forth (to pasture).
7 And they carry your heavy loads to regions which
you could not reach but with distress of the souls; surely
your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful. 8 And (He made)
horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them
and as an ornament; and He creates what you do not
know. 9 And upon God it rests to show the right way,
and there are some deviating (ways); and if He please
He would guide you all aright.

SECTION 2.—**Nature upholds Unity**

10 He it is Who sends down water from the cloud for
you; from it is drink, and by it (grow) the trees upon
which you pasture. 11 He causes to grow for you thereby
herbage, and the olives, and the palm-trees, and the grapes,
and of all the fruits; surely there is a sign in this for a

people who reflect. 12 And He has made subservient for
you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and
the stars are made subservient by His command; surely
there are signs in this for a people who ponder; 13 And
what He has created for you in the earth of varied hues;
surely there is a sign in this for a people who are mindful.
14 And He it is Who has made the sea subservient that
you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it
ornaments which you wear, and thou seest the ships
cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty
and that you may give thanks. 15 And He has cast
great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed
with you,[1] and rivers and roads that you may go aright,
16 And landmarks; and by the stars they find the right
way. 17 Is He Who creates like him who does not create?
Do you not mind? 18 And if you would count God's
favours, you will not be able to number them; surely
God is Forgiving, Merciful. 19 And God knows what you
conceal and what you do openly. 20 And those whom
they call on besides God have not created anything while
they are themselves created; 21 Dead (are they), not
living, and they know not when they shall be raised.[2]

SECTION 3.—**The Rejecters**

22 Your God is one God; and those who do not believe
in the hereafter, their hearts are ignorant and they are
proud. 23 Truly God knows what they hide and what
they manifest; He does not love the proud. 24 And
when it is said to them: What is it that your Lord has
revealed? They say: Stories of the ancients. 25 That
they may bear their burdens entirely on the day of resur-

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[1] The words of the Quran seem to point to the great upheavals and the violent agitations which led to the formation of the mountains, before man's existence on earth. The present condition of the earth *with man upon it* (to this attention is drawn in the words *with you*) is therefore one of stability, making life possible. But the words may also mean *that they might give you food*; see 79 : 32, 33, where the mountains are spoken of as a *provision for you and your cattle*.

[2] These two verses show conclusively that neither Jesus Christ nor any other person who is taken for god ever created anything, and secondly, that Jesus Christ was not alive at the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran, because it is stated in clear words that all those who are called on besides God are dead, *not living*; and the further statement that they do not even know when they will be raised shows that the verse speaks of men taken for gods, and at any rate includes them.

rection and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge; now surely evil is what they bear.

SECTION 4.—**They shall meet Disgrace**

26 Those before them did indeed devise plans, but God demolished their building from the foundations, so the roof fell down on them from above them, and the chastisement came to them from whence they did not perceive.[1] 27 Then on the resurrection day He will bring them to disgrace and say: Where are those whom you set up with Me, for whose sake you became hostile? Those who are given the knowledge will say: The disgrace and the evil are this day upon the unbelievers, 28 Those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to themselves. Then would they offer submission: We used not to do any evil. Ay! God knows what you did. 29 Therefore enter the gates of hell, to abide therein; certainly evil is the dwelling-place of the proud. 30 And it is said to those who guard (against evil): What is it that your Lord has revealed? They say, Good. For those who do good in this world is good, and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better; and most excellent is the abode of the righteous, 31 The gardens of perpetuity, they shall enter them, rivers flowing in them; they shall have in them what they please. Thus does God reward the righteous, 32 Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: Peace be on you, enter the garden for what you did. 33 They do not wait aught but that the angels should come to them or that the commandment of thy Lord should come to pass.[2] Thus did those before them; and God was not unjust to them, but they were unjust to themselves. 34 So the evil (consequences) of what they did shall afflict them and that which they mocked shall encompass them.

SECTION 5.—**Prophets are raised to explain**

35 And they who set up gods (with God) say: If God had pleased, we would not have served any thing besides

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[1] This is a clear prophecy relating to the fate of the opponents.

[2] What is meant by the coming of the angels or the coming of the Lord is made clear by the next verse: it is the punishment for their evil deeds and ultimately their complete overthrow which is meant.

God, (neither) we nor our fathers, nor would we have
prohibited any thing without (order from) Him.[1] Thus
did those before them. Is then aught incumbent upon
the apostles except a plain delivery (of the message)?
36 And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle
saying: Serve God and shun the devil. So there were
some of them whom God guided and there were others
against whom error was due;[2] therefore travel in the land,
and see what was the end of the rejecters. 37 If thou
desirest their guidance, yet surely God does not guide
him who leads astray, nor shall they have any helpers.
38 And they swear by God with the most energetic of
their oaths: God will not raise up him who dies. Yea!
it is a promise binding on Him, quite true, but most people
do not know, 39 So that He might make manifest to
them that about which they differ, and that those who
disbelieve might know that they were liars. 40 Our word
for a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it,
Be, and it is.

SECTION 6.—**Punishment for Opponents**

41 And those who fly for God's sake after they are
oppressed, We will certainly give them a good abode in
the world, and the reward of the hereafter is much greater,
did they but know; 42 Those who are patient and on
their Lord do they rely. 43 And We did not send before
thee any but men to whom We sent revelation—so ask
the followers of the Reminder if you do not know[3]—
44 With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have
revealed to thee the Reminder that thou mayest make

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[1] The answer to this foolish excuse is given in the concluding portion of this verse and continued in the next. God's pleasure is not exercised by compelling people to adopt one way or the other, but by sending His apostles in every age and nation to point out the right way to the people, and by clear messages through the mouths of His ministers to warn people to avoid evil.

[2] I.e. on account of their doings they were left in error or judged as being in error.

[3] By *the followers of the Reminder* are generally understood the Jews and the Christians, to whom it is supposed the Quraish are told to refer the question whether it was not true that only men and not angels were sent with Divine revelation before, but the mention in the very next verse of the *zikr* or the *Reminder* having been sent to the Holy Prophet shows that the words apply to the Muslims. Some commentators, however, take the words generally as meaning learned men.

clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect. 45 Do they who plan evil (plans) feel secure that God may abase them in the earth or that chastisement may overtake them from whence they do not perceive? 46 Or that He may seize them in the course of their journeys, then shall they not escape; 47 Or that He may seize them by causing them to suffer gradual loss; for your Lord is surely Compassionate, Merciful. 48 Do they not consider every thing that God has created? Its (very) shadows return from right and left, making obeisance to God while they are in utter abasement. 49 And whatever creature that is in the heavens and that is in the earth makes obeisance to God (only), and the angels (too), and they do not show pride. 50 They fear their Lord Supreme and do what they are commanded.

SECTION 7.—**Human Nature revolts against Polytheism**

51 And God has said: Take not two gods, He is only one God; so of Me alone should you be afraid. 52 And whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His, and to Him should obedience be (rendered) constantly; will you then guard against other than (the punishment of) God? 53 And whatever favour is (bestowed) on you it is from God; and when evil afflicts you, to Him do you cry for aid. 54 Yet when He removes the evil from you, lo! a party of you set up others with their Lord, 55 So that they may be ungrateful for what We have given them; so enjoy yourselves, for soon will you know. 56 And they set apart for what they do not know a portion of what We have given them. By God, you shall certainly be questioned about that which you forged. 57 And they ascribe daughters to God; glory be to Him; and for themselves (they would have) what they desire. 58 And when a daughter is announced to one of them, his face becomes black and he is full of wrath. 59 He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge.[1]

[1] The allusion is to the barbarous custom of burying daughters alive which was prevalent among the Arabs, especially among their chiefs,

60 For those who do not believe in the hereafter is an
evil attribute, and God's is the loftiest attribute ; and He
is the Mighty, the Wise.

SECTION 8.—**Need of Quranic Revelation**

61 And if God had destroyed men for their iniquity, He
would not leave on it a single creature, but He respites
them till an appointed time ; so when their doom will
come, they will not be able to delay (it) an hour, nor
can they bring (it) on (before its time). 62 And they
ascribe to God what they (themselves) hate and their
tongues relate the lie that they shall have the good ;
there is no avoiding it that for them is the fire and that
they shall be sent before. 63 By God, We sent (apostles)
to nations before thee, but the devil made their deeds
fair-seeming to them ; so he is their guardian to-day, and
they shall have a painful chastisement. 64 And We
have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou
mayest make clear to them that about which they differ,
and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.[1]
65 And God has sent down water from the cloud and
therewith given life to the earth after its death ; surely
there is a sign in this for a people who would listen.

SECTION 9.—**Parables showing Truth of Revelation**

66 And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle :
We give you to drink of what is in their bellies—from
betwixt the fæces and the blood—pure milk, easy and
agreeable to swallow for those who drink. 67 And of the
fruits of the palms and the grapes—you obtain from them
intoxication and goodly provision ; surely there is a sign
in this for a people who ponder. 68 And thy Lord revealed
to the bee saying : Make hives in the mountains and in the
trees and in what they build : 69 Then eat of all the

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and its abolition was one of the numerous blessings of Islam. With no physical or administrative power behind it to ensure its enforcement, the word of God swept off the deep-rooted custom as with a magician's wand, so that not a single case of the burial of a living girl has ever been met with since the mandate came.

[1] This verse states clearly what is hinted at in the opening verses of the section, that a revelation from on high was needed to remove the errors and differences which had arisen after previous revelations, and to give a new life to the dead world, as the verse which follows shows.

fruits and walk in the ways of thy Lord submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for men ; surely there is a sign in this for a people who reflect. 70 And God has created you, then He causes you to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything ; surely God is Knowing, Powerful.

SECTION 10.—Prophet's Excellence

71 And God has made some of you excel others in the means of subsistence, so those who are made to excel do not give away their sustenance to those whom their right hands possess, so that they should be equal therein ; is it then the favour of God which they deny ? 72 And God has made wives for you from yourselves,[1] and has given you sons and daughters from your wives, and has given you of the good things ; is it then in the falsehood that they believe while it is in the favour of God that they disbelieve ? 73 And they serve besides God that which does not control for them any sustenance at all from the heavens and the earth, nor have they any power. 74 Therefore do not give a likeness to God ; surely God knows and you do not know. 75 God sets forth a parable (of) a slave, the property of another, (who) has no power over anything, and one whom We have granted from Ourselves a goodly sustenance, so he spends from it secretly and openly ; are the two alike ? [2] (All) praise is due to God ! Nay, most of them do not know. 76 And God sets forth a parable of two men ; one of them is dumb, not able to do anything, and he is a burden to his master ; wherever he sends him, he brings no good ; can he be held equal with him who enjoins what is just, and he (himself) is on the right path ?

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[1] The statement made here is that for all men wives are created from their *anfus* (plural of *nafs*, meaning *soul* or *self*), and the Bible theory that Eve was created from Adam's rib is thus rejected.

[2] By slave is meant the idol-worshipper, who, instead of being master of idols, stones, and such-like objects, as God had created him to be, chooses to become a slave to them, bows before them, and considers them more powerful than himself. By the master of the goodly provision received from God is meant he who is the recipient of the Divine revelation, i.e the Holy Prophet.

SECTION 11.—**Divine Favours on Man**

77 And God's is the unseen of the heavens and the
earth; and the matter of the hour is but as the twinkling
of an eye or it is nigher still; surely God has power over
all things. 78 And God has brought you forth from the
wombs of your mothers—you did not know anything—
and He gave you the hearing and the sight and the hearts
that you may give thanks. 79 Do they not see the birds,
constrained in the middle of the sky? None withholds
them but God; surely there are signs in this for a people
who believe. 80 And God has given you a place to abide
in your houses, and He has given you tents of the skins
of cattle which you find light to carry on the day of your
march and on the day of your halting, and of their wool
and their fur and their hair (He has given you) household
stuff and a provision for a time. 81 And God has made
for you, of what He has created, shelters, and He has
given you in the mountains places of retreat, and He
has given you garments to preserve you from the heat [1]
and coats of mail to preserve you in your fighting; even
thus does He complete His favour upon you, that haply
you may submit. 82 But if they turn back, then on thee
devolves only the clear deliverance (of the message).
83 They recognize the favour of God, yet they deny it,
and most of them are ungrateful.

SECTION 12.—**Testimony of Prophets**

84 And on the day when We will raise up a witness out
of every nation, then shall no permission be given to those
who disbelieve, nor shall they be made to solicit favour.
85 And when those who are unjust shall see the chastise-
ment, it shall not be lightened for them, nor shall they
be respited. 86 And when those who set up gods (with
God) shall see their associate-gods, they shall say: Our
Lord! these are our associate-gods on whom we called
besides Thee. But they will give them back the reply:
Certainly you are liars. 87 And they shall tender sub-
mission to God on that day; and what they used to forge

[1] The mention of one of two contrary things always involves the other; thus when heat is spoken of, cold is understood, and when light is spoken of, darkness is understood, and *vice versa*.

shall depart from them. 88 Those who disbelieve and turn away from God's way, We will add chastisement to their chastisement because they made mischief. 89 And on the day when We will raise up in every people a witness against them from among themselves, and bring thee as a witness against these—and We have revealed the Book to thee explaining clearly everything, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit.

SECTION 13.—Revelation enjoins Good

90 God enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.[1] 91 And fulfil the covenant of God when you have made a covenant, and do not break the oaths after making them fast, and you have indeed made God a surety for you; God knows what you do. 92 And be not like her who unravels her yarn, disintegrating it into pieces after she has spun it strongly. You make your oaths to be means of deceit between you because (one) nation is more numerous than (another) nation.[2] God only tries you by this; and He will certainly make clear to you on the resurrection day that about which you differed. 93 And if God please He would make you a single nation, but He leaves in error whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases; and certainly you will be questioned as to what you did. 94 And do not make your oaths a means of deceit

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[1] The lowest form of goodness is that which is called *'adl* (literally *justice*) or *returning good for good*, and includes not only justice proper, but also the fulfilment of all duties and obligations, as they all more or less take the form of doing good for good. A higher degree of goodness is, however, that which is called *ihsán*. It is the doing of good in cases where man has received no benefit. The highest degree of goodness is that which is called *the giving to the kindred*, for what a man gives to his own kindred, to his children or parents or brothers and sisters, is given out of a natural desire, and hence the last stage of goodness is that in which a man's nature is so inclined to good that he has not to make an effort for doing good, but the doing of good becomes as it were a second nature with him. Similarly this verse deals with the three degrees of evil, from the merest indecency to the wrongful conduct which violates the rights of individuals and nations.

[2] The verse applies with much greater truth to the civilized Christian nations who have not the least regard for their treaties—especially when the other party to the treaty is weak—in fact, it has become a by-word among them that agreements are made to be violated.

between you, lest (your) foot should slip after its stability and you should taste evil because you turned away from God's way and grievous chastisement be your (lot).
95 And do not take a small price in exchange for God's covenant; for what is with God is better for you, did
you but know. 96 What is with you passes away and what is with God is enduring; and We will certainly give to those who are patient their reward for the best
of what they did. 97 Whoever does good whether male or female,[1] and he is a believer, We will make him live a happy life, and We will give them their reward for the
best of what they did. 98 So when thou recitest the Quran, seek refuge with God from the accursed devil.
99 He has no authority over those who believe and rely
on their Lord. 100 His authority is only over those who befriend him and those who set up gods with him.

SECTION 14.—Quran is not a Forgery

101 And when We change (one) communication for (another) communication, and God knows best what He reveals, they say: Thou art only a forger. Nay, most of them
do not know.[2] 102 Say: The Holy Spirit has revealed it from thy Lord with the truth, that it may establish those who believe and as a guidance and good news for
those who submit. 103 And certainly We know that they say: Only a mortal teaches him. The tongue of him whom they reproach is barbarous, and this is clear
Arabic tongue.[3] 104 Those who do not believe in God's

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[1] The Quran here affords another reply to the ignorant statement made in certain quarters that according to Islam women have no souls. The happy life, or the life in paradise, is here distinctly promised to females as well as males.

[2] This chapter belongs to Mecca, and there does not exist the slightest evidence that any verse had been abrogated while the Holy Prophet was at Mecca. Moreover, the context clearly shows that it was the revelation of the Quran itself that was called a forgery, and not an occasional change that any of its commandments could have undergone, with which change the unbelievers had, in fact, no concern. What the unbelievers objected to was either the revelation of a new book while there was in existence a previous revelation, or the giving up of their own customs and usages, which had become sacred to them. The answer in the first case is that the same Holy Spirit which brought revelation to Jesus Christ and other prophets also brought it to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and in the second, that their usages were not founded on Divine revelation, while the Quran was based on such revelation.

[3] Various names have been suggested as to the person whom the opponents of the Prophet referred to. These are mostly the names of Christian

communications, God will not guide them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. 105 Only they forge the lie who do not believe in God's communications, and these are the liars. 106 He who disbelieves in God after having believed, not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of faith, but he who opens (his) breast for disbelief—on these is the displeasure of God and they shall have a grievous chastisement.[1] 107 This is because they love this world's life more than the hereafter, and because God does not guide the unbelieving people. 108 These are they on whose hearts and their hearing and their eyes God has set a seal, and these are the heedless ones. 109 No doubt that in the hereafter they will be the losers. 110 Yet thy Lord, with respect to those who fly after they are persecuted, then they struggle hard and are patient, thy Lord after that is surely Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 15.—**Fate of Meccans**

111 (Remember) the day when every soul shall come, pleading for itself, and every soul shall be paid in full what it has done, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. 112 And God sets forth a parable (of) a town safe and secure, to which its means of subsistence came in abundance from every quarter; but it became ungrateful to God's favours, so God made it taste the utmost hunger and fear because of what they wrought.[2] 113 And cer-

slaves, Jabr, Yasir, Aish or Yaish, Qais, Addas. The name of Salman is suggested by Prideaux, which Sale shows to be an utterly baseless conjecture, as Salman came after the Flight. All these slaves were among the early converts to Islam, and it was they who were most cruelly persecuted by the Quraish; yet they remained firm under the severest tortures. Is it possible to conceive that they, without being in the least gainers, should have thus willingly suffered persecutions for a cause which they knew to be false?

[1] Only very rare instances are met with in the early history of Islam in which the converts even under compulsion ever recanted.

[2] The parable is set forth to depict the state of Mecca as it was before the time of the Holy Prophet and the fate to which it was to be reduced after he was rejected, *after it became ungrateful for God's favour.* Its first condition was one of great prosperity and influence, being the centre to which all tribes came for pilgrimage and trade, but when they persecuted the Holy Prophet and turned the Muslims out of Mecca to take shelter in Abyssinia, Mecca was visited by a famine so severe that the Meccans ate bones and corpses; and later it found an army of ten thousand Muslims at its gates, before which they had no choice but to surrender. The original for *utmost* is *libás*, meaning a *covering*, as if they were all covered over with hunger and fear.

tainly there came to them an Apostle from among them,
but they rejected him, so the chastisement overtook them
while they were unjust. 114 Therefore eat of what God
has given you, lawful and good (things), and give thanks
for God's favour if Him do you serve. 115 He has only
forbidden you what dies of itself and blood and flesh of
swine and that over which any other name than that of
God has been invoked, but whoever is driven to necessity,
not desiring nor exceeding the limit, then surely God is
Forgiving, Merciful. 116 And, for what your tongues
describe, do not utter the lie, (saying), This is lawful and
this is unlawful, in order to forge a lie against God ; those
who forge the lie against God shall not prosper. 117 A
little enjoyment and they shall have a painful chastise-
ment. 118 And for those who were Jews We prohibited
what We have related to thee already,[1] and We did them
no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves. 119 Yet
thy Lord, with respect to those who do an evil in ignorance,
then turn after that and make amends, surely thy Lord
after that is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 16.—**Muslims' Controversy and Dealing**

120 Abraham was an exemplar, obedient to God, upright,
and he was not of the polytheists, 121 Grateful for His
favours ; He chose him and guided him on the right path.
122 And We gave him good in this world, and in the next
he will surely be among the good. 123 Then We revealed
to thee : Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one,
and he was not of the polytheists. 124 The Sabbath was
ordained only for those who differed about it,[2] and surely
thy Lord will judge between them on the resurrection day
concerning that about which they differed. 125 Call
to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhorta-
tion, and have disputations with them in the best manner ;[3]

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[1] The reference is to 6 : 147. This verse may have been revealed at a later date than the rest of this chapter.

[2] Those who differed about the Sabbath are the Jews and the Christians, the latter making Sunday their Sabbath. What is meant is that Saturday was ordained as Sabbath or day of worship for the Jews and the Christians, there being no such day among the Muslims.

[3] The principle laid down for preaching and religious controversy by the "Unlearned Arabian" has yet to be learned by the most advanced people, whose controversies are carried on with no other object than that of fault-finding, and whose preaching is meant only to carp at others.

thy Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way.
126 And if you take your turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted ;[1] but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient.
127 And be patient and thy patience is not but by (the help of) God, and grieve not for them, and do not distress thyself at what they plan. 128 God is with those who guard (against evil), and those who do good (to others).

PART XV

CHAPTER 17

BANÍ-ISRÁÍL: THE ISRAELITES

(*Mecca*—12 *sections ;* 111 *verses*)

THIS chapter opens and ends with a reference to the history of the *Israelites* and therefore goes under that name. It is meant to be a warning not only to the opponents of the Holy Prophet, but also to the Muslims themselves who are here told how the Israelites, after being made a great nation and rising to power and eminence, were punished and almost annihilated because they no more walked in the ways which had brought them to greatness and transgressed the Divine laws.

The chapter opens with a reference to the *Miraj*, or the spiritual Ascension of the Holy Prophet, which indicates the eminence which the Holy Prophet was to achieve and the greatness to which Islam was to rise. Thus, while the last section of the last chapter gives certain directions to the Muslims, by following which they can become a great nation, here in the very commencement we have in the Holy Prophet's ascension a clear prophecy of the greatness of the Muslim nation. After this reference, the Muslims are warned of the fate of the Israelite nation, which had been raised to eminence before them, but which failed to retain that high position. The second section establishes the immortal principle that every deed has a consequence, the universal law of cause and effect, a right understanding of which alone can raise man to the true dignity which befits humanity. The next two sections contain moral precepts which the Muslims are required to follow. Yet all these high moral teachings only cause the unbelievers to grow harder, as is shown in the fifth section, hence the next section deals with

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[1] The permission granted here to retaliate when the Muslims overcome their opponents is prophetical, as in the last section (v. 112) it is plainly indicated that the Meccans shall be overcome. Retaliation is no doubt permitted, but this is more than balanced by the injunction to be patient, which is repeated thrice.

their punishment, whilst it enjoins the faithful to be gentle, even to their opponents. The seventh section refers to the universal law that the mischief-makers have always stood up in opposition to the righteous, and the eighth speaks specifically of the opposition to the Holy Prophet. The next section, however, makes it clear that that opposition would be brought to naught, for falsehood must disappear before the advance of truth. The advent of the Holy Prophet has been here described as the advent of *truth* itself, or of the *Spirit of Truth* mentioned by John. The tenth shows how great a miracle the Holy Quran is in itself, yet the opponents seek other signs. How trivial are the excuses on which they reject the Holy Quran is set forth in the eleventh section, and the justice of their retribution is thus made clear. The last section draws attention to Moses' warning to Pharaoh, the mighty ruler of Egypt, and gives a similar warning through the Holy Quran, ending with a brief mention of the absurdity of the doctrine of "sonship" which is dealt with at greater length in the two chapters that follow.

From this to the 23rd chapter we have another group of seven chapters, all revealed at Mecca. The first five of these undoubtedly belong to the fourth, fifth, or sixth year of the Prophet's ministry, as we have a report from Ibn-i-Masud who said that these five chapters were among the *tiládí*, i.e. revealed at an early date at Mecca. The fact that this chapter contains a reference to the *Miraj* is additional evidence that it was revealed early as a reference to the Miraj is also contained in the 53rd chapter, which is admitted on all hands to be an early revelation.

SECTION 1.—Punishment of Israelites

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs; surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.[1] 2 And We gave Moses the Book and made it a guidance to the children of Israel, saying: Do not take a protector besides Me.[2] 3 The offspring of those whom We bore with Noah; he was a grateful servant

[1] This journey is generally supposed to refer to the Ascension (*Mi'ráj*) of the Holy Prophet which was undoubtedly a vision or *kashf*, as stated in v. 60. The significance underlying this vision is the future triumph of the cause of the Holy Prophet. The remote mosque stands for Jerusalem, the significance being that the Prophet shall inherit all the blessings of the Israelite prophets, including the Holy Land. See also note on v. 60.

[2] The connection between these two verses is that the first verse really prophesies a great future for Islam and the Muslims, while this warns them of the pitfalls of greatness, citing the instance of a nation that had been made to rise to eminence before them.

indeed. 4 And We decreed against the children of Israel in the Book: Certainly you will make mischief in the land twice,[1] and you will behave insolently with great insolence. 5 So when (the time for) the first of the two promises came, We sent against you Our servants, of mighty prowess, who went to and fro among (your) abodes, and it was a promise to be accomplished. 6 Then We gave you back the turn to prevail against them, and aided you with wealth and children and made you a numerous band.[2] 7 If you do good, you will do good for your own souls, and if you do evil, it shall be for them. And when (the time for) the second promise came, (We raised another people) that they may bring you to grief and that they may enter the mosque as they entered it the first time, and that they might destroy whatever they gained ascendancy over with utter destruction.[3] 8 It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, and if you again return (to disobedience) We too will return (to punishment), and We have made hell a prison for the unbelievers. 9 Truly this Quran guides to that which is most upright and gives good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a great reward. 10 And that those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful chastisement.

SECTION 2.—**Consequences of Deeds**

11 And man prays for evil as he ought to pray for good, and man is ever hasty. 12 And We have made the night and the day two signs, then We made the sign of the night to pass away and We have made the sign of the day manifest, so that you may seek grace from

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[1] Compare 5 : 78. Jerusalem was destroyed twice as a punishment for the transgressions of the Jews, once by the Babylonians, and again by the Romans. See Jesus' warning in Matt. 23 : 38 : "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," and Luke 21 : 24 : "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," and various other like references. The Psalms are also replete with warnings.

[2] Verse 5 relates the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem and the murder, imprisonment, and banishment of the Jews by the Babylonians in the year 588 B.C., while v. 6 relates to the return of the Jews and re-building of the temple under Zerubbabel, and to their subsequent prosperity. This is the turn of fortune spoken of here.

[3] This verse describes the destruction of the temple a second time, which was accomplished by the Romans under Titus.

your Lord, and that you might know the numbering of
years and the reckoning; and We have explained every
thing with distinctness. 13 And We have made every
man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring
forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will
find wide open.[1] 14 Read thy book; thy own self is
sufficient as a reckoner against thee this day.[2] 15 Who-
ever goes aright, for (the benefit of) his own soul does he
go aright; and whoever goes astray, to its detriment only
does he go astray; and the bearer of a burden cannot bear
the burden of another,[3] nor were We going to chastise
until We raised an apostle.[4] 16 And when We wish to
destroy a town, We send Our commandment to those
who lead easy lives in it, but they transgress therein;
thus the word proves true against it, and We destroy it
with utter destruction. 17 And how many of the genera-
tions did We destroy after Noah! And thy Lord is suffi-
cient as Knowing and Seeing with regard to His servants'
sins. 18 Whoever desires this present life, We hasten
to him therein what We please for whomsoever We desire,
then We assign to him the hell; he shall enter it despised,
driven away. 19 And whoever desires the hereafter and
strives for it as he ought to strive and he is a believer, their
striving shall be gratefully accepted. 20 All do We aid—
these as well as those—out of the bounty of thy Lord, and
the bounty of thy Lord is not confined. 21 See how We
have made some of them to excel others, and certainly the
hereafter is much superior in respect of degrees and much
superior in respect of excellence. 22 Do not set up with
God any other god, lest thou sit down despised, neglected.

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[1] The verse reveals the principle that every action produces an effect which is made to cling to a man, and that this very effect will be met with on the resurrection day in the form of a wide-open book. It is thus by leaving its effect behind that every action of man is recorded, and this very effect constitutes the book of a man's actions.

[2] Note that according to this verse the reckoning of a man's actions shall be his own work on the day of resurrection. This statement throws a flood of light on the nature of that reckoning and the *wazn* and the *mizán* (7 : 8; 55 : 7), showing clearly that it is nothing but a complete manifestation of the effects of the deeds done in this life.

[3] This verse strikes at the root of the doctrine of atonement. Every action of a man produces a consequence which no one else can blot out.

[4] The transgressions of the people were great, but God had first sent an apostle to warn them. Or the meaning is that God does not punish people for breaking a law until He has revealed that law through a prophet.

SECTION 3.—**Moral Precepts to do Good**

23 And thy Lord has commanded that you shall not
serve (any) but Him and (that you do) goodness to your
parents. If either of them or both of them reach old
age with thee, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor
chide them, and speak to them a generous word. 24 And
make thyself submissively gentle to them with compassion,
and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as
they brought me up (when I was) little. 25 Your Lord
knows best what is in your minds; if you are good, He is
surely Forgiving to those who turn (to Him) frequently.
26 And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy
and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. 27 The
squanderers are indeed the brethren of the devils, and
the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord. 28 And if thou
turn away from them to seek mercy from thy Lord which
thou hopest for, speak to them a gentle word. 29 And
do not make thy hand to be shackled to thy neck nor
stretch it forth to the utmost (limit) of its stretching forth,[1]
lest thou shouldst (afterwards) sit down blamed, stripped
off. 30 Thy Lord makes plentiful the means of subsist-
ence for whom He pleases and He straitens (them); He
is ever Aware of, Seeing, His servants.

SECTION 4.—**Moral Precepts to avoid Evil**

31 And do not kill your children for fear of poverty;
We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); to kill
them is indeed a great wrong.[2] 32 And go not nigh to
fornication; for it is an indecency and evil is the way.
33 And do not kill any one whom God has forbidden
except for a just cause, and whoever is slain unjustly,
We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not
exceed the just limits in slaying; for he is aided. 34 And
draw not near to the property of the orphan except in a
goodly way till he attains his maturity and fulfil the
promise; for (every) promise shall be questioned about.
35 And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh

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[1] I.e. be neither niggardly nor too profuse. The verse inculcates the duty of economy.

[2] This verse prohibits infanticide in any form, but Rághib gives another meaning: *It is a prohibition against keeping children uneducated.*

with a true balance; this is fair and better in the end.
36 And follow not that of which thou hast not the know-
ledge;[1] for the hearing and the sight and the heart, all
of these, shall be questioned about that. 37 And do
not go about in the land exultingly, for thou canst not
cut through the earth nor reach the mountain in height.
38 All this—the evil of it—is hateful in the sight of thy
Lord. 39 This is of what thy Lord has revealed to thee
of wisdom, and do not set up any other god with God
lest thou shouldst be thrown into hell, blamed, cast away.
40 What! has your Lord preferred to give you sons, and
(for Himself) taken daughters from among the angels!
Surely you utter a grievous saying.

SECTION 5.—Unbelievers grow harder

41 And We have repeated (warnings) in this Quran that
they may be mindful, but it does not add save to their
aversion. 42 Say: If there were with Him gods as they
say, then they would have been able to seek a way to the
Lord of the throne.[2] 43 Glory be to Him and exalted
be He in high exaltation above what they say. 44 The
seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and
those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but
glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand
their glorification; surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving.
45 And when thou recitest the Quran, We place between
thee and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden
barrier; 46 And We have placed coverings on their hearts
and a heaviness in their ears lest they understand it, and
when thou mentionest thy Lord alone in the Quran, they
turn their backs in aversion.[3] 47 We know best what
they listen to when they listen to thee, and when they
take counsel secretly, when the unjust say: You follow

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[1] This verse prohibits the spreading of unfounded reports which are so often the subject-matter of society gossip and cause heart-burning to many an innocent man and woman.

[2] I.e. idol-worshippers should have gained the nearness of the Divine Being, and should thus have been purified of all impurities.

[3] It is because they do not even listen to the mention of God, and fly in aversion from His word, that there follows a heaviness in their ears and a covering over their hearts. God brings this about, but He brings it about on account of the condition of their own hearts and ears. See 7:179.

only a man deprived of reason. 48 See, what they liken thee to! So they have gone astray and cannot find the way. 49 And they say: What! when we shall have become bones and decayed particles, shall we then be raised up to a new creation? 50 Say: Become stones or iron, 51 Or some other creature of those which are too hard (to receive life) in your minds! But they will say: Who will return us? Say: He Who created you at first. Still they will shake their heads at thee and say: When will it be? Say: Maybe it has drawn nigh.[1] 52 On the day when He will call you forth, you shall obey Him, giving Him praise, and you will think that you tarried but a little (while).

SECTION 6.—Punishment must follow

53 And say to My servants (that) they speak that which is best; surely the devil sows dissensions among them, for the devil is an open enemy to man.[2] 54 Your Lord knows you best; He will have mercy on you if He pleases, or He will chastise you if He pleases; and We have not sent thee as being in charge of them. 55 And thy Lord best knows those who are in the heavens and the earth; and certainly We have made some of the prophets to excel others, and to David We gave a scripture. 56 Say: Call on those whom you assert besides Him, so they shall not control the removal of distress from you nor (its) transference. 57 Those whom they call upon, themselves seek the means of access to their Lord—whoever of them is nearest—and they hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement; surely the chastisement of thy Lord is a thing to be cautious of. 58 And there is not a town but We will destroy it before the day of resurrection or chastise it with a severe chastisement; this is written in the Book.[3] 59 And nothing could have hindered Us that We should

[1] Evidently the spiritual resurrection to be brought about by the Holy Prophet is also hinted at.

[2] The Muslims are here enjoined to be very kind when they speak to the unbelievers.

[3] It is a law to which history bears evident testimony. Populous towns and cities of one age are the ruins of another. This law which worked in old days operates even now. The hand of time continues to devastate old habitations, while new ones are erected in their places.

send signs except that the ancients rejected them;[1]
and We gave to Samood the she-camel—a manifest sign
—but they did injustice by (slaying) her; and We only
send signs to make (men) fear.
60 And when We said
to thee: Surely thy Lord encompasses men. And We
did not make the vision which We showed thee but a trial
for men[2] and the cursed tree[3] in the Quran as well; and
We cause them to fear, but it only adds to their great
inordinacy.

SECTION 7.—The Devil's Opposition

61 And when We said to the angels, Make obeisance to
Adam, they made obeisance, but Iblis (did it not). He
said: Shall I make obeisance to him whom Thou hast
created of dust?
62 (And) he said: Tell me, is this he
whom Thou hast honoured above me? If Thou shouldst
respite me to the day of resurrection, I will cause his
progeny to perish except a few.
63 He said: Be gone!
for whoever of them will follow thee, hell is surely your

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[1] The meaning is clear: the only thing which could possibly be a hindrance in the continuance of Divine communications or the sending of signs to one generation after another would be the rejection of it by the first generation, but that consideration never hindered the Divine Being from sending communications or signs to a later generation. That this verse does not deny the sending of signs is conclusively proved by the fact that it concludes with the statement that *signs are sent to make men fear*, and by the very next verse affirming in the clearest language that even now *We cause them to fear*, which could not have been done otherwise than by sending signs.

[2] The reference here is to the vision of Ascension which gave the Holy Prophet promise of great success. There has been a difference of opinion among the learned as to whether the Holy Prophet's ascension was bodily or spiritual; the majority adhere to the first view, but among those who hold the latter view there are personages of sound opinion, such as Ayesha and Muavia. In view of the plain words of the Quran, however, which refer to the ascension as being a *vision*, the opinion of the majority must be rejected. What is related in the sayings of the Holy Prophet corroborates this. One report begins thus: "Whilst I was in a state between that of one sleeping and one awake." In another report we have: "And he awoke and he was in the Sacred Mosque."

[3] The cursed tree is the tree of *zaqqúm*. As the Prophet's vision signified his future triumph and gave an indication of the greatness to which Islam would rise, the statement made elsewhere that the tree of *zaqqúm* was the food of sinners (44:43, 44) contained a prophecy of the discomfiture of the enemies of Islam, telling them that a deadly food was in store for them. It was these two prophecies that the opponents laughed to scorn, hence they were a trial for them. And the reason why the vision and the statement about the cursed are conjoined is thus evident. The triumph of Islam and the discomfiture of the enemy went hand in hand.

recompense, a full recompense: 64 And beguile whom-
soever of them thou canst with thy voice, and collect
against them thy forces riding and on foot, and share with
them in wealth and children,[1] and hold out promises to
them; and the devil makes not promises to them but to
deceive: 65 (As for) My servants, thou hast no authority
over them; and thy Lord is sufficient as a Protector.
66 Your Lord is He Who speeds the ships for you in the
sea that you may seek of His grace; for He is ever Merciful
to you. 67 And when distress afflicts you in the sea,
away go those whom you call on except He; but when
He brings you safe to the land, you turn aside; and man
is ever ungrateful. 68 What! do you feel secure that
He will (not) bring you low on a tract of land or send
on you a punishment? Then you shall not find a pro-
tector for yourselves. 69 Or, do you feel secure that He
will (not) take you back into it another time, then send
on you a fierce gale and thus drown you on account of
your ungratefulness? Then you shall not find any aider
against Us in the matter. 70 And We have truly dignified
the children of Adam, and We carry them in the land
and the sea, and We have given them of the good things,
and We have made them to excel, by a (high) degree of
excellence, most of those whom We have created.

SECTION 8.—**Opposition to the Prophet**

71 (Remember) the day when We will call every people
with their leader; then whoever is given his book in his
right hand, these shall read their book; and they shall
not be dealt with a whit unjustly.[2] 72 And whoever is
blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter, and
more erring from the way.[3] 73 And they had indeed

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[1] The forces of the devil are no other than the evil-doers, those going quickly into evil being likened to riders, and those who walk slowly in their evil course being likened to footmen. The sharing of the devil in wealth signifies *everything spent unlawfully or acquired* unlawfully; and sharing in children is in reference to *committing fornication, which results in illegitimate births*.

[2] This book is the one mentioned in v. 14, i.e. the effect of one's deeds, which shall be brought before every one in palpable form on the resurrection day.

[3] This verse shows what hellish life is and when it begins. We are here told in plain words that those who remain blind to truth in this life remain blind in the life after death, which shows in the first place that it is here

purposed to turn thee away from that which We have revealed to thee that thou shouldst forge against Us other than that, and then they would have taken thee for a friend.
74 And had it not been that We had already established thee, thou wouldst certainly have been near to incline to them a little.[1]
75 In that case We would have made thee to taste a double (punishment) in this life and a double (punishment) after death, then thou wouldst not have found any helper against Us.
76 And surely they purposed to unsettle thee from the land that they might expel thee from it, and in that case they will not tarry behind thee but a little.[2]
77 (This is Our) course with regard to those of Our apostles whom We sent before thee, and thou shalt not find a change in Our course.

SECTION 9.—**Advent and Triumph of Truth**

78 Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; for the morning recitation is witnessed.[3]
79 And during a part of the night, forsake sleep by it, beyond what is incumbent on thee; [4] maybe thy Lord will raise thee to a position of great glory.
80 And say: My Lord! make me to enter a goodly entering, and cause me to go forth

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that a hellish life begins with spiritual blindness; and secondly, that the hell of the next life is also a blindness. This is corroborated by what is said in 57 : 13, that the faithful shall have a light on that day, and the hypocrites shall ask for that light from them, but they shall not be allowed to have it, and this will be their torment.

[1] The so-called "lapse" of the Holy Prophet is a mere myth. The incident which is alluded to here is given in Ibn-i-Hisham. The chief men of the Quraish met in an assembly and invited the Prophet, saying to him that they were prepared to gather for him wealth or to make him their king if he only gave up speaking of their idols. The Prophet's reply was that he wanted neither of these things, but that it was for their welfare that he asked them to give up evil ways. On an earlier occasion, when a deputation of the Quraish went to Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, to prevail upon him to dissuade the Prophet from speaking of their idols, and Abu Talib told the Prophet that he too was unable to defend him against the Quraish, his reply was: "If they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left and ask me to give up my mission, I will not give it up until the truth prevails or I myself perish in the attempt."

[2] This prophecy speaks of the conquest of Mecca by the Holy Prophet in self-evident terms.

[3] The morning prayer is said to be witnessed, i.e. there is greater concentration of mind at that time.

[4] The reference is to the midnight prayer called *tahajjud*.

a goodly going forth, and grant me from near Thee a power to assist (me).[1] 81 And say: The truth has come and the falsehood vanished; [2] surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing). 82 And We reveal of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only to the perdition of the unjust. 83 And when We bestow favour on man, he turns aside and behaves proudly, and when evil afflicts him, he is despairing. 84 Say: Every one acts according to his manner; but your Lord best knows who is best guided in the path.

SECTION 10.—**Quran as a Unique Miracle**

85 And they ask thee about the revelation.[3] Say: The revelation is by the commandment of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little. 86 And if We please, We should take away that which We have revealed to thee, then thou wouldst not find for it any protection against Us, 87 But on account of mercy from thy Lord—surely His grace to thee is abundant. 88 Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others.[4] 89 And

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[1] This is a prophetical reference to the Flight. By the *entering* is meant the *entry into the new place*, i.e. *Medina*, after his flight, and *by going forth*, the *flight from Mecca*.

[2] The coming of the Prophet is here spoken of as the coming of the *Truth*, in reference to the prophecy in John 16 : 13 as to the coming of the "Spirit of Truth" to guide men into all truth: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." No one has appeared in the world after Jesus Christ answering this description except the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And the disappearance of falsehood from Arabia before his eyes showed the truth of this assertion.

[3] The original word *rúh* means *inspiration* or *revelation* as well as *spirit*. Here, before this verse as well as after it, the Quran is the only topic of discussion, and therefore the context shows clearly that the question of the unbelievers is not about the *soul* of man, for which the proper word is *nafs*, but about the Quran itself, i.e. *the revelation* or *the spirit*. And the Holy Quran is plainly called *rúh* in 42 : 52.

[4] For the uniqueness of the Holy Quran see 2 : 23, 24; 10 : 38; 11 : 13. It may be noted that out of the four places in which the unbelievers are challenged to produce the like of the Quranic revelation, this is the only one where the *jinn* and the *men* are spoken of together; in 2 : 23, instead of *jinn*, we have *shu hadá 'kum*, i.e. your leaders or helpers. Now the word *jinni* (plural *jinn*) is used in Arabic language as signifying *a man acting with penetrative energy in his affair*, as is clearly maintained by Tabrezi; thus, reading this verse along with 2 : 23, it becomes certain

certainly We have repeated for men in this Quran every kind of argument, but most men do not consent to aught but denying. 90 And they say: We will by no means believe in thee until thou cause a fountain to gush forth from the earth for us:[1] 91 Or thou shouldst have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which thou shouldst cause rivers to flow forth, gushing out: 92 Or thou shouldst cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces as thou assertest, or bring God and the angels face to face (with us): 93 Or thou shouldst have a house of gold, or thou shouldst ascend into heaven and we will not believe in thy ascending until thou bring down to us a book which we may read. Say: Glory be to my Lord! am I aught but a mortal apostle?[2]

SECTION 11.—**Prophet's Rejection**

94 And nothing prevents people from believing when the guidance comes to them except that they say: What! has God raised up a mortal to be an apostle? 95 Say: Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as an apostle. 96 Say: God suffices as a witness between me and you; for He is Aware of His servants, Seeing. 97 And whomsoever God guides, he is the follower of the right way, and whomsoever He leaves in error, thou shalt not find for him guardians besides Him; and We will gather them together on the day of resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf; their abode is hell; whenever it becomes allayed, We will add to their burning. 98 This is their retribution because they disbelieved in Our communications and said: What! when we shall have become bones and decayed particles, shall we then indeed be raised up into

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that the word *jinn* here conveys the same significance as the word *shuhadâ* (leaders) in that verse.

[1] The signs demanded in this and the following three verses relate to the promises made for the righteous and the threats of punishment for the wicked, as given in the Quran, and they were no doubt fulfilled in their time.

[2] The answer to all the demands of the unbelievers is that the Prophet was only a mortal apostle, the import of these words being that all those prophecies which he had made regarding his own great future or the discomfiture of his enemies would be brought to fulfilment gradually and in their proper time.

a new creation? 99 Do they not consider that God Who created the heavens and the earth is able to create their like?[1] And He has appointed for them a doom about which there is no doubt, but the unjust do not consent to aught but denying. 100 Say: If you controlled the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, then you would withhold (them) from fear of spending, and man is niggardly.

SECTION 12.—**Mosaic Dispensation fulfilled in Islam**

101 And We gave Moses nine clear signs, so ask the Israelites when he came to them, and Pharaoh said to him: I deem thee, O Moses, to be a man deprived of reason. 102 He said: Thou knowest that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these as clear proofs and I believe thee, O Pharaoh, to be given over to perdition. 103 So he desired to destroy them out of the earth, but We drowned him and those with him all together; 104 And We said to the Israelites after him, Abide in the land;[2] and when the latter promise came, We brought you all rolled up.[3] 105 And with truth have We revealed it, and with truth did it come; and We have not sent thee but as the giver of good news and as a warner. 106 And it is a Quran which We have sent in portions so that thou mayest read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have revealed it, revealing in portions. 107 Say: Believe in it or believe not; those who are given the knowledge before it fall down on their faces, making obeisance, when it is recited to them, 108 And they say: Glory be to our Lord! surely the promise of our Lord was to be fulfilled.[4] 109 And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility. 110 Say: Call upon God

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[1] The word *their* refers to men, so that what is affirmed is that God Who created the vast heavens and the earth has also the power to create the *like* of men in resurrection. This shows that the rising is not with the body that the soul leaves at death.

[2] By the *land* is meant the land promised to the Israelites, i.e. Palestine

[3] The latter promise here relates to the promise given to Moses for the raising up of another prophet like him. This is corroborated by what is said in the next verse about the revelation of the Quran, which came with truth, i.e. in fulfilment of a true promise. By the rolling up of the Israelites is meant that they would make room for another people.

[4] The *promise* spoken of here is no doubt the promise given to the former prophets regarding the advent of the Holy Prophet; and by *knowledge* in the previous verse is also meant *knowledge of the prophecies.*

or call upon *Rahmán*;[1] whichever name you give (Him), He has the best names; and do not utter thy prayer with a very raised voice nor be silent with regard to it, and seek a way between these.
111 And say: (All) praise is due to God, Who has not taken a son and Who has not a partner in the Kingdom, and Who has not a helper to save Him from disgrace; and proclaim His greatness, magnifying (Him).

CHAPTER 18

AL-KAHF: THE CAVE

(*Mecca*—12 *sections*; 110 *verses*)

THIS chapter deals chiefly with the Christian religion and the Christian nations. Why is this chapter called the *Cave*, then? The cave has, in fact, much to do with the growth and progress of the Christian religion, because the distinctive characteristic of its early history is its institution of monkery, which required for its practice such corners of solitude as caves.

The last chapter dealt with the Israelites and the punishment which they twice suffered. The second occasion was the one connected with the rejection of Jesus Christ, and hence the last chapter was brought to a close by pointing out the erroneousness of attributing a son to the Divine Being, while that very doctrine is denounced at the commencement of this chapter, thereby clearly establishing the connection of the two. Moreover, as Christianity is really an outgrowth of the Judaistic religion, the mention of the one necessitates the mention of the other.

The chapter opens with a plain denunciation of the Christian doctrine of the sonship of Jesus, and then refers to the earthly "embellishments" which hinder the Christian nations from accepting the truth; yet, we are told, it was their ancestors who cut off all worldly connections for the sake of their religion. The second and the third sections deal with a certain story of Christian youths who sought refuge in a cave, but the story has evidently beneath it a deeper significance and contains prophetical reference to the

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[1] The name *Rahmán*, or *the Beneficent God*, seems to have been particularly objectionable to the Arabs. The Christians also do not recognize God to be *Rahmán*, because the attribute of *rahmániyyat* signifies that God shows mercy to His creatures without their having done anything to deserve it, while the Christian doctrine of atonement is based on the belief that God cannot show mercy to His creatures because He must be just; an error due to the misapprehension that God cannot be Just and Merciful at one and the same time. No doubt a mere judge may be unable to show mercy, but God is more than a judge. He is a judge and cannot be unjust, but He is also the Master, and therefore Merciful to the sinner. To show mercy is not synonymous with being unjust.

later history of Christianity itself. The fourth section shows that, the day of Christianity being over, true guidance was now offered in the Holy Quran. The fifth illustrates in a parable that the Christians shall reject the truth because of their great power and wealth. The next two sections deal with the bringing of the guilty to judgment and their ultimate helplessness, while the one succeeding indicates how warning is disregarded when first given. The ninth and tenth sections take us back to the story of Moses, whose travels in search of knowledge make him discover a man of God superior in knowledge to himself. The eleventh section speaks of Darius I, the two-horned one of Daniel's vision, and of his great efforts against the two tribes known as Gog and Magog, the real object being a prophetical allusion to their latter-day representatives. The last section of the chapter again refers in plain language not only to the basic doctrine of the Christian religion, but also to the great ingenuity in manufactures of the nations professing that religion, whose *labour is lost in this world's life*, and thus draws a very true picture of the present condition of the Christian nations.

SECTION 1.—A Warning to Christians

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 (All) praise is due to God, Who revealed the Book to
His servant and did not make in it any crookedness.[1]
2 Maintainer (of truth) that he might give warning of
severe punishment from Him and give good news to the
believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward,
3 Staying in it for ever; 4 And warn those who say:
God has taken a son. 5 They have no knowledge of it,
nor had their fathers; a grievous word it is that comes out
of their mouths; they speak nothing but a lie. 6 Then
maybe thou wilt kill thyself with grief, sorrowing after

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[1] There is a saying of the Holy Prophet relating to the verses with which this chapter opens: *He who remembers the first ten verses of the chapter entitled the "Cave" is protected from the tribulation of the Dajjál (Antichrist).* Another saying mentions the last ten verses of the "Cave" instead of the first ten (Muslim). Now both the first and the last ten verses of this chapter deal with the basic doctrine of the Christian religion which ascribes a son to God or calls Jesus Christ Divine. From this it would be seen that what is called Dajjál or Antichrist in the sayings of the Holy Prophet is really the teaching of the Church which is directly opposed to the teaching of Christ. Hence Antichrist is nothing but Christianity in its present form. This is quite in accordance with the significance of *dajjál* as given in Arabic lexicons. The word is derived from *dajala*, which means *he covered*, and according to Ibn-i-Sayyidah, *Dajjál* is so called because he shall cover truth with falsehood; others say because he shall cover the earth with his masses; others still, because he shall cover people with unbelief.

them, if they do not believe in this announcement.[1] 7 We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them (as to) which of them is best in work.[2] 8 And We will surely make what is on it bare ground without herbage. 9 Or, dost thou think that the Fellows of the Cave and the Inscription were of Our wonderful signs ?[3] 10 When the youths sought refuge in the cave, they said : Our Lord ! grant us mercy from Thee, and provide for us a right course in our affair. 11 So We prevented them from hearing in the cave for a number of years. 12 Then We sent them that We might know which of the two parties was best able to guard the time for which they remained.

SECTION 2.—**Dwellers of the Cave**

13 We relate to thee their story with truth ; they were youths who believed in their Lord and We increased them in guidance.[4] 14 And We strengthened their hearts with

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[1] This verse gives us an insight into the anxiety which the Holy Prophet had on account of a fallen humanity, an anxiety so great that he is spoken of here as almost *killing himself with grief.* His was a life of absolute devotion to the cause of humanity, his only concern being that man should rise to the true dignity for which God had made him. Here this anxiety of his is mentioned particularly in relation to Christian nations.

[2] A dweller of the desert of Arabia, with no sight before his eyes but that of the sands of the desert and bare and rugged hills, could not imagine the earth being embellished. The picture drawn here is evidently of beautiful cities with all their attractions and luxuries, which so engross men that they neither pay attention to the preaching of truth nor to the pursuit of righteousness. Yet where there is growth there is decay, and those who indulge in luxuries do not escape ruin ; it is their ruin that is indicated in the words *bare ground without herbage* in the next verse.

[3] *Kahf* signifies *a cave* as well as *a place of refuge*, and *raqim* means *an inscription* or *a tablet with a writing upon it.* Now the *cave*, as I have already stated in the introduction to this chapter, stands for that peculiar aspect of the Christian religion which finds manifestation in its institution of monkery, this being the distinctive characteristic which it assumed soon after its birth. But what about the *inscription* ? This word, I think, contains a prophetical reference to another aspect of the Christian religion quite opposed to its first aspect of growth in the *cave.* Inscription is, in fact, as prominent a feature of the business activities of the Christian nations of to-day as the cave was a feature of their religious activities in the early days, and the Holy Quran seems to have chosen these epithets to designate the Christian nations by thus indicating their most prominent characteristics in their early and latter days. The first and the last conditions of Christianity thus seem to be hinted at in the *cave* and the *inscription* respectively, *a religion of monkery turned into a religion of business*, the *cave* representing the former and the *inscription* the latter.

[4] The memorable story of the "seven sleepers," with whom the "Fellows of the Cave and the Inscription" are identified, is a story of the reign

patience, when they stood up and said: Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth; we will by no means call upon any god besides Him, for then indeed we should have said an extravagant thing. 15 These our people have taken gods besides Him; why do they not produce any clear authority in their support? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against God? 16 And when you forsake them and what they worship save God, betake yourselves for refuge to the cave; your Lord will extend to you largely of His mercy and provide for you a profitable course in your affair. 17 And thou mightest see the sun when it rose decline from their cave towards the right hand, and when it set leave them behind on the left, while they were in a wide space thereof.[1] This is

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of the Emperor Decius. Seven noble youths of Ephesus, it is said, took refuge in a cave to escape Decius's persecution. But the Emperor, eventually learning this, ordered the entrance to the cave to be firmly secured with a pile of large stones. It is stated that the youths fell asleep as soon as they were shut up in the cave, and awoke 187 years after this in the reign of Theodosius, when the stones were removed by the slaves of one Adolius to supply building material for some edifice. They then sent one of their number, Jamblicus, to bring food for them from the city, but he was taken to the judge on presenting a coin of the reign of Decius, and thus the youths were discovered. It is related that the Emperor himself saw their radiant faces. This is the account given by Gibbon. But some state that these youths remained in that condition for 375 years.

That there may be a modicum of truth underlying this story is not only most probable, but almost certain, for the story could not otherwise have found such a wide prevalence. The story, as narrated in the Quran, does not credit the unnatural incidents of the above account. It only speaks of some men having taken refuge in a cave on account of a religious persecution; they remained there for several years (v. 11); then they were sent for the reformation of their people, having spent the time of their retirement profitably (v. 12: *they guarded their time*, not so their persecutors). This is repeated in the second section, and to this is added a description of the cave (v. 17). In the third section we are told that after they had rested for a part of a day, they made arrangements to get their food from outside, and remained in this condition probably for some years; but were subsequently discovered, and they preached the truth to their people (v. 21) and a memorial was then raised over their place, ultimately their very graves being taken for places of worship.

[1] The verse does not speak of any miraculous change in the sun's course; it does not speak of any *change* at all. It simply describes the position of the cave, which was so situated that it did not admit sunshine. This could easily happen in a cave with its mouth to the north, situated in the northern hemisphere and above the tropic of Cancer. It may be noted that it is only in the northern hemisphere, and in countries situated mostly to the north of Arabia, that the Christian nations have prospered. The whole of Europe thus, in one sense, answers the description of the cave.

of the signs of God; whomsoever God guides, he is the rightly guided one, and whomsoever He leaves in error, thou shalt not find for him any friend to lead him aright.

SECTION 3.—Dwellers of the Cave

18 And thou mightest think them awake while they were asleep, and We turned them about to the right and to the left, while their dog lay outstretching its paws at the entrance; if thou didst look at them thou wouldst turn back from them in flight, and thou wouldst be filled with awe because of them.[1]
19 And thus did We rouse them that they might question each other. A speaker among them said: How long have you tarried? They said: We have tarried for a day or a part of a day. (Others) said: Your Lord knows best how long you have tarried.[2] Now send one of you with this silver (coin) of yours to the city, then let him see which of them has purest food, so let him bring you provision from it, and let him behave with gentleness, and by no means make your case known to any one:[3]
20 For if they prevail against you they would stone you to death or force you back to their religion, and then you will never succeed.
21 And thus did We make (men) to get knowledge of them, that they might know that God's promise is true, and that as for the

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[1] The meaning is that the youths who fled for fear of persecution, and betook themselves to a cave, slept for some time with a dog at the door of the cave. The whole scene was rather awe-inspiring; a dark cave, in some distant and uninhabited part of the country, with some men sleeping in it and a dog at the door, would have inspired awe into the heart of a casual looker-on. Applied to the history of Christianity the statement is equally true. In this case it should be borne in mind that *ruqúd* also means *inactive*, or *stagnant*, and *aiqáz* means *wary* or *vigilant*. The *turning about to the right and the left*, which signifies an uneasy condition while sleeping, may be used as expressing the activities of a man or a nation. Thus there may be a reference here to the lethargy in which the Christians remained for a long time, and to their subsequent going about in the world to *the right and to the left*, i.e. spreading in all directions. The scene of a modern European house is on the whole so impressive that the description given here of the cave is equally applicable to it, while the dog is almost invariably met with there.

[2] The question and the answer may refer either to the time for which the youths slept or to the centuries of inactivity or tardiness of the Christian nations. A day of a thousand years is spoken of in the Holy Quran on more occasions than one; and therefore the word *day*, applied to the history of a nation, may signify a thousand years.

[3] In reference to the history of Christianity, the passage may be said to speak of the commercial activities of the Christian nations.

hour, there is no doubt about it. When they disputed among themselves about their affair and said: Erect a building over them—their Lord best knows them. Those who prevailed in their affair said: We will certainly raise a place of worship over them.[1] 22 (Some) will say: (They are) three, the fourth of them being their dog; and (others) say: Five, the sixth of them being their dog; making conjectures at what is unknown; and (others yet) say: Seven, and the eighth of them is their dog. Say: My Lord best knows their number, none knows them but a few; therefore contend not in the matter of them but with an outward contention, and do not question concerning them any of them.

SECTION 4.—Quran as a Guidance

23 And do not say of anything, I will do it to-morrow,
24 Unless God please; and remember thy Lord when thou forgettest and say: Maybe my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this.[2] 25 And they remained in their cave three hundred years and (they) add (another) nine.[3] 26 Say: God knows best how long they remained; to Him are (known) the unseen things of the heavens and the earth; how clear His sight and how clear His hearing! There is none to be a guardian for them besides Him, and He does not make any one His associate in His judgment. 27 And recite what has been revealed to thee of the Book of thy Lord; there is none who can change His

[1] The people were made to know God's promise and the coming of the hour through the preaching of these youths, and at last they regarded them with such honour that they raised a memorial over their hiding-place; the subsequent generations, *those who prevailed in their affair*, going to the extent of worshipping their tombs. This probably refers to the saint-worship which was so common among early Christians.

[2] There seems to be a reference here to the Prophet's flight and his taking shelter in a cave, but the promise is given that he will obtain an easier triumph. He had to pass only three days in the cave. Or, the meaning is that the Quran offers a better guidance.

[3] There seems to be a reference here to the three centuries during which Christianity was more or less a persecuted religion in the Roman Empire, all persecution of Christians stopping with the conversion of Constantine. It may be added that the Nicene Creed, which formulated the doctrine of the Trinity, was promulgated in the year A.D. 325, and thus the Christian religion may be said to have retained its original purity for three centuries, after which the Trinitarian, instead of the Unitarian, religion became the State religion. Thus from both points of view the Christian religion may be said to have remained in the cave for three centuries.

words;[1] and thou shalt not find any refuge besides Him.
28 And withhold thyself with those who call on their
Lord morning and evening desiring His good will, and
let not thy eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties
of this world's life; and do not follow him whose heart
We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he
follows his low desires and his case is one in which due
bounds are exceeded. 29 And say: The truth is from
your Lord, so let him who please believe, and let him who
please disbelieve; We have prepared for the iniquitous
a fire, an enclosure of which shall encompass them about;
and if they cry for water, they shall be given water like
molten brass which will scald their faces; evil the drink
and ill the resting-place! 30 (As for) those who believe
and do good, We do not waste the reward of him who does
a good work. 31 These it is for whom are gardens of
perpetuity, rivers flowing beneath them; ornaments shall
be given to them therein of bracelets of gold, and they
shall wear green robes of fine silk and thick silk brocade
interwoven with gold, reclining therein on raised couches;[2]
excellent the recompense and goodly the resting-place!

SECTION 5.—**A Parable of Islam and Christianity**

32 And set forth to them a parable of two men; for
one of them We made two gardens of grape-vines, and
We surrounded them both with palms, and in the midst
of them We made cornfields.[3] 33 Both these gardens

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[1] The *kalimát* or *words* here are the prophecies of the final triumph of the Holy Prophet. The alteration of the text of a revealed book is quite a different thing, and is spoken of as *tahríf*.

[2] It should be borne in mind, as plainly stated in 13 : 35 and elsewhere, that the ornaments and clothes and couches of paradise are not the things of this world, but the spiritual fruits of the good done in this life. The terms to express the blessings of the next life are necessarily taken from this life but their nature is quite different. People hanker after comfort and ease, and they are told that abiding comfort and ease are obtainable only through the struggle for good.

[3] The parable—it is clearly called a parable and is not at all a story —set forth here is undoubtedly a parable to illustrate the condition of those possessing abundance of the wealth of this life and those who attain to moral greatness. The Christians received an abundance of the wealth of this life, as is indicated by the gardens of the parable, while the Muslims, though poorer in worldly possessions, were richer in the heavenly blessings. The former reject the message of truth—of which the latter are the bearers —and their vaunt is the same as that of the wealthy man in the parable: *I have greater wealth than thou, and am mightier in followers.*

yielded their fruits, and failed not aught thereof, and We
caused a river to gush forth in their midst. 34 And he
possessed much wealth; so he said to his companion,
while he disputed with him: I have greater wealth than
thou, and am mightier in followers. 35 And he entered
his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said: I
do not think that this will ever perish, 36 And I do not
think the hour will come, and even if I am returned to
my Lord I will find a returning-place better than this.
37 His companion said to him while disputing with him:
Dost thou disbelieve in Him Who created thee from dust,
then from a small life-germ, then He made thee a perfect
man? 38 But as for me, He, God, is my Lord, and I do
not associate any one with my Lord: 39 And wherefore
didst thou not say when thou didst enter thy garden, It
is as God has pleased, there is no power save in God?
If thou considerest me to be inferior to thee in wealth
and children: 40 Then maybe my Lord will give me
what is better than thy garden, and send on it a reckoning
from heaven, so that it shall become even ground without
plant: 41 Or its water should sink down into the ground
so that thou art unable to find it. 42 And his wealth
was destroyed; so he began to wring his hands for what
he had spent on it, while it lay, having fallen down upon
its roofs, and he said: Ah me! would that I had not
associated any one with my Lord. 43 And he had no
host to help him besides God, nor could he defend himself.
44 Here is protection only from God, the True One; He
is best in (the giving of) reward and best in requiting.

SECTION 6.—Guilty are brought to Judgment

45 And set forth to them the parable of the life of this
world: (It is) as water which We send down from the
cloud, so the herbage of the earth becomes luxuriant
on account of it, then it becomes dry, broken into pieces
which the winds scatter; and God is the Holder of power
over all things. 46 Wealth and children are an adornment
of the life of this world; and the ever-abiding, the good
works, are better with thy Lord in reward and better in
expectation. 47 And the day on which We will cause
the mountains to pass away and thou wilt see the earth

a levelled plain and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind. 48 And they shall be brought before thy Lord, standing in ranks. Now certainly you have come to Us as We created you at first, nay, you thought that We had not appointed to you a time of the fulfilment of the promise. 49 And the book shall be placed,[1] then thou wilt see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: Ah! woe to us! what a book is this! it does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them (all); and what they had done they shall find present (there); and thy Lord does not deal unjustly with any one.

SECTION 7.—Their Helplessness

50 And when We said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they made obeisance save Iblis; he was of the jinn, so he transgressed the commandment of his Lord.[2] What! would you then take him and his offspring for friends rather than Me, and they are your enemies; evil is (this) change for the unjust. 51 I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own souls; nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders. 52 And on the day when He shall say: Call on those whom you considered to be My associates. So they shall call on them, but they shall not answer them, and We will cause a separation between them. 53 And the guilty shall see the fire, then they shall know that they are going to fall into it, and they shall not find a place to which to turn away from it.

SECTION 8.—Warning is disregarded

54 And We have indeed repeated in this Quran every kind of argument; and man is most of all given to contention. 55 And nothing prevents men from believing when the guidance comes to them, and from asking forgiveness of their Lord, except that what happened

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[1] See 17 : 13, 14. It is the book of the consequences of what is done.

[2] Here Iblis is plainly declared to be one of the jinn or the evil spirits, so it is an error to take him for an angel or a good spirit. The spirit of evil is always rebellious, and it is against this that man is warned, in order that he should resist every evil tendency.

to the ancients should overtake them, or that the chastisement should come face to face with them. 56 And We do not send apostles but as givers of good news and warning, and those who disbelieve make a false contention that they may render null thereby the truth, and they take My communications and that with which they are warned for a mockery. 57 And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the communications of his Lord, then he turns away from them and forgets what his two hands have sent before? We have placed veils over their hearts lest they should understand it and a heaviness in their ears; and if thou call them to the guidance, they will not ever follow the right course in that case.[1] 58 And thy Lord is Forgiving, the Lord of Mercy; were He to punish them for what they earn, He would have hastened the chastisement for them; but for them there is an appointed time from which they shall not find a refuge. 59 And those towns did We destroy when they acted unjustly, and for the destruction of these We have (also) appointed a time.[2]

SECTION 9.—**Moses goes in search of Knowledge**

60 And when Moses said to his servant: I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two rivers, or I will go on for years.[3] 61 And when they had reached

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[1] It is clearly stated here again when veils are placed over hearts; it is when man becomes so iniquitous as to turn away from the truth and so callous as not to care for the evil he does. He hardens his heart and refuses to listen; hence a veil is placed over his heart, and there is a heaviness in his ears.

[2] The personal pronoun in the latter part refers to the opponents of the Holy Prophet.

[3] The incidents narrated in the ninth and the tenth sections may be the actual experience of Moses, or this journey may simply be an ascension of Moses, like the ascension of the Holy Prophet referred to in the last chapter. What is stated in the next section makes the latter view more probable, but even taking it to be an actual journey in search of knowledge, there is nothing improbable in it. It should be borne in mind that Moses lived in Egypt for a long time, and the junction of the two rivers is no other than the junction of the two great branches of the Nile at Khartoum, one of which is called the *White Nile* and the other the *Blue Nile*. That the story of this journey of Moses is not found in the Bible or even in Rabbinical literature is no argument against it. The Rabbinical literature relates things about Moses which give us strong reason to believe that such a journey was very probably undertaken by him. South of Egypt was the kingdom of Ethiopia, whose southern boundary reached Khartoum, or the junction of the two Niles, and various accounts met with

the junction of the two (rivers), they forgot their fish,
and it took its way into the river, going away.[1] 62 So
when they had gone farther, he said to his servant: Bring
to us our morning meal; we have met with fatigue from
this our journey. 63 He said: Didst thou see when we
took refuge on the rock, I forgot the fish, and nothing
made me forget to mention it but the devil, and it took
its way into the river; what a wonder![2] 64 He said:
This is what we sought for; so they returned retracing
their footsteps. 65 Then they found one from among
Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Us and
whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves. 66 Moses
said to him: Shall I follow thee on condition that thou
shouldst teach me right knowledge of what thou hast
been taught? 67 He said: Thou canst not have patience
with me: 68 And how canst thou have patience in that
of which thou hast not got a comprehensive knowledge?
69 He said: If God please, thou wilt find me patient and I
shall not disobey thee in any matter. 70 He said: If
thou wouldst follow me, then do not question me about
any thing until I myself speak to thee about it.

SECTION 10.—Moses goes in search of Knowledge

71 So they went (their way) until when they embarked
in the boat he made a hole in it. (Moses) said: Hast

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both in Rabbinical and Hellenistic literature (see *Jewish Encyclopædia*) agree that Moses went to Ethiopia. According to one of these accounts he became king of Ethiopia by reason of his great prowess in having defeated an enemy, and married the king's widow. This is corroborated to some extent by the statement in the Bible that "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married" (Num. 12 : 1). Hence a journey to Khartoum, which was near the southern boundary of Ethiopia, made in search of knowledge is most probable. If we accept this journey in the light of an ascension it would be an indication of the limitation of the Mosaic dispensation. Moses' going on for years until he reached the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain* would mean that the Mosaic dispensation would see its termination after a time; the new dispensation taking its place being one which was to be guided by a prophet who is described here as being the *Majma'-ul-Bahrain*, or one in whom the temporal and the spiritual would find their highest manifestation.

[1] The loss of the fish was, according to a report in Bukhari, to serve as a sign that the goal had been attained.

[2] The taking of refuge on the rock shows that they were staying at a place which was flooded by the river, and Moses' companion, when flying for refuge, forgot to take the fish along with him. The wonder is not expressed at the fish having gone down into the river, but because he had forgotten to mention the loss to Moses.

thou made a hole in it to drown its inmates? Certainly thou hast done a grievous thing. 72 He said: Did I not say that thou wilt not be able to have patience with me? 73 He said: Blame me not for what I forgot, and do not constrain me to a difficult thing in my affair. 74 So they went on until when they met a youth, he slew him. (Moses) said: Hast thou slain an innocent person otherwise than for man-slaughter? Surely thou hast done an evil thing.

PART XVI

75 He said: Did I not say to thee that thou wilt not be able to have patience with me? 76 He said: If I ask thee about anything after this, keep me not in thy company; indeed thou shalt have (then) found an excuse in my case. 77 So they went on until when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to entertain them as guests. Then they found in it a wall which was on the point of falling, so he put it into a right state. (Moses) said: If thou hadst pleased, thou mightest have taken a recompense for it. 78 He said: This shall be separation between me and thee; now I will inform thee of the significance of that with which thou couldst not have patience.[1] 79 As

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[1] The interpretation of the three incidents shows a manifestation of Divine wisdom in what takes place in the everyday life of man. Divine laws as manifested in nature are really working towards ultimate good, though sometimes they may appear to the outward eye to be working to the detriment of somebody. The beneficent hand of God that works in nature is always directing humanity to the goal of great good, though that goal must necessarily be reached with apparent loss. Sometimes the loss is only apparent, as in the case of making a hole in the boat; there was no real loss, but the apparent loss served a great purpose and brought much benefit to the owner. The second instance is that in which there is real loss to a person, but it is for the good of humanity at large, for life must be sacrificed for the ultimate good of humanity. The third instance shows that for the good of humanity deeds must be done which bring no immediate reward, and that good done by one generation is not devoid of benefit to the next.

Moses himself had, in fact, to undergo the experience of his teacher, and the incidents seem no more than prophetic allegories of Moses' own life-work. Just like the scuttling of a boat which causes apprehension as to the safety of its inmates, Moses had to lead his people to a place where they thought they had only been brought to be drowned; but their safe passage through the water showed that it was for their good. Then he had to order his men to fight against iniquitous people and to put them to death, but he was not shedding human blood to no purpose,

for the boat, it belonged to (some) poor men who worked on the river and I wished that I should damage it, and there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force. 80 And as for the youth, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should make inordinacy and ingratitude to come upon them: 81 So we desired that their Lord might give them in his place one better than him in purity and nearer to having compassion: [1] 82 And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; so thy Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure, a mercy from thy Lord, and I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that with which thou couldst not have patience.

SECTION 11.—The Two-horned One, and Gog and Magog

83 And they ask thee about Zulqarnain.[2] Say: I

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for it was really a step towards the evolution of a better race. And finally, his laying down his own life for the Israelites—descendants of a righteous man—corresponded to his teacher's building of the wall for the orphans without claiming recompense.

[1] The youth was really guilty of grave offences such as murder and dacoity, and he was likely to involve his believing parents in the same inordinacy of which he himself was guilty; he was put to death on account of his grievous offences.

[2] The word *Zulqarnain* literally means the *two-horned one*. The reference is to the two-horned ram of Daniel's vision (Dan. 8 : 3), which he interpreted as the kingdom of Media and Persia (Dan. 8 : 20), which were combined into a single kingdom under one ruler, Cyrus, who is erroneously called Darius in the Bible (*En. Bib.* and *Jewish En.*, Art. "Darius"). The reference in Daniel's vision is, however, not to Cyrus but to Darius I Hystaspis (521–485 B.C.), "who allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple, and is referred to in Ezra 4 : 5, 24; 5 : 5; 6 : 1; Hag. 1 : 1; 2 : 10; Zech. 1 : 7, and probably in Neh. 12 : 22. His liberality towards the Jews is in complete accord with what we know otherwise of his general policy in religious matters towards the subject nations" (*En. Bib.*, "Darius").

That the reference in the Quran in the history of Zulqarnain is to Darius I is clear from the fact that "Darius was the organizer of the Persian Empire. His conquests served to round out the boundaries of his realm in Armenia, the Caucasus, and India, and along the Turanian steppes and the highlands of Central Asia" (*Jewish En.*, "Darius I"). The following remarks in the *En. Br.* strengthen this view: "Darius in his inscriptions appears as a fervent believer in the true religion of Zoroaster. But he was also a great statesman and organizer. The time of conquests had come to an end; the wars which Darius undertook, like those of Augustus, only served the purpose of gaining strong natural frontiers for the empire and keeping down the barbarous tribes on its borders. Thus Darius subjugated the wild nations of the Pontic and Armenian

will recite to you an account of him. 84 We established him in the land and granted him means of access to every thing, 85 So he followed a course. 86 Until when he reached the limit whither the sun set he found it going down into a black sea,[1] and found by it a people. We said: O Zulqarnain! either give them a chastisement or do them a benefit. 87 He said: As to him who is unjust, we will chastise him, then shall he be returned to his Lord, and He will chastise him with an exemplary chastisement: 88 And as for him who believes and does good, he shall have goodly reward, and We will speak to him an easy word of Our command. 89 Then he followed (another) course. 90 Until when he reached the limit whither the sun rose, he found it rising on a people to whom We had given no shelter from it; 91 Even so! and We had a full knowledge of what he had. 92 Then he followed (another) course.[2] 93 Until when he reached (a place) between the two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word. 94 They said: O Zulqarnain! Gog and Magog make mischief in the land. Shall we then pay thee a tribute on condition that thou shouldst raise a barrier between us and them.[3] 95 He

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mountains, and extended the Persian dominion to the Caucasus; for the same reason he fought against the Sacæ and other Turanian tribes." The references in this quotation to Darius being a fervent believer in the true religion of Zoroaster, to his subduing the barbarous tribes on the borders, to his gaining strong natural frontiers for the empire, and to his fighting against the Sacæ, clearly point him out as the Zulqarnain of the Quran.

[1] The place referred to is no other than the Black Sea, as, Armenia being within the Kingdom of Persia, the Black Sea formed the north-western boundary of the empire. The western boundary of his kingdom is indicated by the words *maghrib-ash-shams*, which mean *the utmost part of the land in the western direction*, the land here signifying his own territory.

[2] The three journeys alluded to seem to have been undertaken with the object of strengthening the frontiers of the empire, the most important of these being directed to the part of the frontier between the Caspian and the Black Seas, where the Caucasus afforded a natural protection against the attacks of the Scythians. Darius goes first westward to the Black Sea, then eastward, and lastly northward to Mount Caucasus. The description of the people in v. 90 as a people who had no shelter from the sun is a description of the barbarous aboriginal tribes on the shores of the Caspian and the two mountains of v. 93 are the mountains of Armenia and Azarbaijan.

[3] There is much difference as to the identity of Gog and Magog, but Ezek. 38 : 2 gives us the clue: "Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." Tubal and Meshech are almost always mentioned together, and their identification has been a task of great difficulty, so much so that a renowned Biblical critic suggests the names of certain

said: That in which my Lord has established me is better,
therefore you only help me with workers,[1] I will make a
fortified barrier between you and them.[2] 96 Bring me
blocks of iron;[3] until when he had filled up the space
between the two mountain sides, he said, Blow; until
when he had made it (as) fire, he said: Bring me molten
brass which I may pour over it. 97 So they were not

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nations in South Palestine. But this contradicts the views of ancient writers like Josephus, who settle the Magog north of the Caucasus. If we go, however, to the north of Caucasus we find still two rivers bearing the names of Tobal and Moskoa, on the latter of which is situated the ancient city of Moscow, and on the former the more recent town of Tobolsk. It seems almost certain that these two rivers received their names from the two tribes of Ezek. 38:2, the Tubal and Meshech, and then gave their names to the two above-mentioned cities, thus keeping the names of these tribes. This view is in accordance with the opinion of Josephus, who identifies Magog with the Scythians, for "throughout classical literature Scythia generally meant all regions to the north and north-east of the Black Sea, and a Scythian any barbarian coming from these parts."

It is clear from the above that the name Magog stands for tribes which occupied territories to the north and north-east of the Black Sea, tribes which gave their names directly or indirectly to the towns of Tobolsk and Moscow.

Next we come to the statement that the tribes found by Darius between Azarbaijan and the Armenian mountains were constantly harassed by their northern neighbours, the Scythians. History bears evidence to the truth of this statement. According to Herodotus, the Scyths ruled Media for twenty-eight years (*En. Br.*, Art. "Scythia"). "About 512 Darius undertook a war against the Scythians. . . . The purpose of this war can only have been to attack the nomadic Turanian tribes in the rear, and *thus to secure peace on the northern frontier of the empire*" (*En. Br.*, Art. "Darius"). The portion which I give in italics shows that Darius exerted himself to his utmost in securing peace on the northern frontier of his empire, where the Caucasus, bounded on both sides by the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, afforded a natural protection.

[1] Ar. *quwwah* or *strength*. But what is meant here is labour or workers.

[2] The barrier referred to in this verse, and described in the verses that follow, is the famous wall at Derbent (Ar. *Darband*). An account of this wall is given by Muslim geographers and historians, for instance, in Marasid-ul-Ittila and Ibn-ul-Faqih. The following account, however, taken from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, should be more convincing: "Derbent or Darband, a town of Persia, Caucasia, in the province of Daghestan, on the western shore of the Caspian. . . . It occupies a narrow strip of land beside the sea, from which it climbs up the steep heights inland. . . . And to the south lies the seaward extremity of the Caucasian wall (50 miles long), otherwise known as Alexander's Wall, blocking up the narrow pass of the Iron Gate or Caspian Gate (*Portus Albanæ*, or *Portus Caspæ*). This, when entire, had a height of 29 feet and a thickness of about 10 feet, and with its *iron gates* and numerous watch-towers formed *a valuable defence of the Persian frontier*." (Italics in the last sentence are mine, for which see the next footnote.) The misnomer Alexander's Wall seems to have been due to the mistake made by Muslim historians in supposing Zulqarnain to be Alexander.

[3] The blocks of iron were needed for the iron gates in the wall, for which see the concluding lines of the last note.

able to scale it, nor could they make a hole in it. 98 He said: This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass He will make it level with the ground, and the promise of my Lord is ever true. 99 And on that day We will leave a part of them in conflict with another part, and the trumpet will be blown, so We will gather them all together;[1] 100 And We will bring forth hell, exposed to view, on that day before the unbelievers, 101 They whose eyes were under a cover from My reminder, and they could not even hear.

SECTION 12.—**Christian Nations**

102 What! do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants to be guardians besides Me? We have prepared hell for the entertainment of the unbelievers. 103 Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in (their) deeds? 104 (These are) they whose labour is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well-versed in skill of the work of hands.[2] 105 These are they who disbelieve in the communications of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, and therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the day of resurrection. 106 Thus it is that their recompense is hell, because they disbelieved and held My communications and My apostles in mockery. 107 (As for) those who believe and do good deeds, their place of entertainment shall be the gardens of Paradise, 108 Abiding therein; they shall not desire removal from them. 109 Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted,

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[1] There is a change here from the historical to the prophetical. The Gog and Magog of the old days were to have their representatives in the latter days. The only other reference to Gog and Magog in the Holy Quran is contained in 21 : 96 where they are stated as taking possession of all places of advantage and eminence. This would identify them clearly with the European races, and the Slavs (settling as they do in Russia, the land of Magog) and the Teutons may therefore be suggested to be the modern representatives of Gog and Magog, and the verse prophetically refers to some mighty conflict of the European nations. V. 104 also lends support to this conclusion.

[2] This is a clear description of the present attitude of the civilized nations to their moral and spiritual needs—their labour is entirely submerged in this world's life, and they cannot give a moment's consideration to the life after death, and their only qualification is that they are well versed in the skill of the work of their hands.

though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add
thereto.[1] 110 Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is
revealed to me that your God is one God; therefore
whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds,
and not join any one in the service of his Lord.

CHAPTER 19

MARY

(*Mecca—6 sections; 98 verses*)

THE controversy with Christianity is continued in this chapter, and the title is taken from the name of Jesus' mother, *Mary*; the circumstances connected with her having given birth to Jesus are narrated here. But while the last chapter deals at greater length with the history of Christianity than with its doctrines, this devotes considerable space to the falsity of the Christian religious dogmas, which it shows to be absolute innovations and quite foreign to the teachings of all the prophets, establishing at the same time the doctrine of the sinlessness of prophets.

The first two sections deal with the last representatives of prophecy in the house of Israel, viz. John and Jesus. The false doctrines that grew up round the name of the latter are clearly denounced at the end of the second section; the history of Abraham in the third, and that of some other prophets in the fourth, is referred to as showing that God always sent men as His prophets to reform the world. Towards the close of the fourth section it is stated that mere faith unattended with good deeds or righteousness is as nothing, and cannot benefit a people except when it is translated into practice. The fifth section deals with the opponents of the prophets generally, while the sixth brings to a close the discussion of the Christian religion by outspokenly denouncing the false doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus. For its date of revelation, see note on ch. 17.

SECTION 1.—**Zacharias and John**

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Sufficient, Guide, Blessed, Knowing, Truthful (God).[2]
2 A mention of the mercy of thy Lord to His servant
Zacharias, 3 When he called upon his Lord in a low

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[1] The *words* of God are here clearly His creatures; even so is Jesus a word of God.

[2] *Káf* stands for *káfi*, i.e. *Sufficient*, *há* for *hádi*, i.e. *Guide*, *yá* for *yamín* meaning *Blessed*, *'ain* for *'alim*, i.e. *Knowing*, and *sád* for *sádiq*, i.e. *Truthful*.

voice. 4 He said: My Lord! my bones are weakened and
my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never
been unblessed in praying to Thee: 5 And I fear my
cousins after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant
me form Thyself an heir,[1] 6 Who should inherit me and
inherit from the children of Jacob, and make him, my
Lord, one in whom Thou art well pleased. 7 O Zacharias!
We give thee good news of a boy whose name shall be
John; We have not made before anyone his equal.[2]
8 He said: O my Lord! how shall I have a son, and my
wife is barren, and I myself have reached the extreme
degree of old age? 9 He said: So shall it be; thy Lord
says, It is easy to Me, and indeed I created thee before,
when thou wert nothing. 10 He said: My Lord! give
me a sign. He said: Thy sign is that thou shouldst
not speak to the people three nights while in sound health.[3]
11 So he went forth to his people from his place of worship,
and made known to them that they should glorify (God)
morning and evening. 12 O John! take hold of the
Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while
yet a child, 13 And tenderness from Us and purity, and
he was one who guarded (against evil), 14 And dutiful to
his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient.[4] 15 And
peace on him on the day he was born, and on the day he
dies, and on the day he is raised to life.

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[1] I.e. one who should lead people into righteousness. The inheritance from the children of Jacob in the next verse makes this clear.

[2] It is not of course meant that one like John or equal to him was never before created in the world (though Jesus Christ in Matt. 11 : 11 seems to hold this view). The meaning is that one like him was not born in Zacharias' family, because in the previous verse it was his own relatives about whom Zacharias said that he feared them.

[3] The Quran does not support the idea that Zacharias was struck dumb, and seems to contradict the Bible narrative by saying here plainly that he was to observe this commandment though in sound health, such being the meaning of *sawiyyá*. The truth is here evidently on the side of the Quran, and the writer of the Gospel had clearly some misapprehension, for being struck dumb had no connection with being granted a son. According to the Holy Quran, the object of assuming silence was to be engaged solely in prayer to the Divine Being, and hence Zacharias told his people also to glorify God.

[4] The various aspects of the character of John should be pondered over by the upholders of the exclusive sinlessness of Jesus Christ. John was pure and sinless and never disobeyed God.

SECTION 2.—**Mary and Jesus**

16 And mention Mary in the Book when she drew aside
from her family to an eastern place;[1] 17 So she took a
veil (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her
Our inspiration, and there appeared to her a well-made
man.[2] 18 She said: I fly for refuge from thee to the
Beneficent God, if thou art one guarding (against evil).
19 He said: I am only a bringer of a message from thy
Lord, That I will give thee a pure boy. 20 She said:
How shall I have a boy and no mortal has yet touched
me,[3] nor have I been unchaste? 21 He said: Even so;
thy Lord says, It is easy to Me; and that We may make
him a sign to men and a mercy from Us; and it is a matter
which has been decreed. 22 And she conceived him,[4]
then withdrew herself with him to a remote place. 23 And
the throes (of child-birth) compelled her to betake herself
to the trunk of a palm-tree.[5] She said: Oh, would that
I had died before this, and had been a thing quite for-
gotten! 24 Then (a voice) called out to her from beneath
her: Grieve not, thy Lord has made a stream to flow
beneath thee: 25 And shake towards thee the trunk of
the palm-tree, it will drop on thee fresh ripe dates: 26 So
eat and drink and refresh the eye; and if thou seest
any mortal, say: I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent
God, so I shall not speak to any man to-day. 27 And

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[1] The reference is probably to Nazareth, which lay to the north-east of Jerusalem. She had to leave the temple when she attained puberty.

[2] This shows that it was in a vision that the angel came, and the conversation that follows also took place in a vision. The word *tamassala* used here lends support to this, for the word signifies *assuming the likeness of another thing*, and this happens only in vision.

[3] No mortal had touched her yet, but it does not negative a union after that. The Gospels tell us that Joseph knew her (Matt. 1 : 24, 25) and that she gave birth to several children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus (Matt. 13 : 55).

[4] Mary conceived Jesus "as women conceive children," says a report of the Holy Prophet.

[5] The reference to the throes of child-birth clearly shows that an ordinary human child was coming into the world, and thus it bespeaks a denial of his divinity. Or there may be a reference to Gen. 3 : 16, *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children*. The object in either case is clearly to show that the birth of Jesus was not attended with any extraordinary circumstances, and that his mother brought him forth in the ordinary way, so his conception also could not have taken place otherwise than in the regular course of nature.

she came to her people with him, carrying him [1] (with
her). They said: O Mary! thou hast brought a strange
thing: 28 O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a bad
man, nor was thy mother an unchaste woman.[2] 29 But
she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak
to one who was a child in the cradle? [3] 30 He said:
I am a servant of God; He has given me the Book and
made me a prophet: 31 And He has made me blessed
wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer
and poor-rate so long as I live: [4] 32 And dutiful to my

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[1] The conversation that is related to have taken place in the verses that follow is alone sufficient to make it clear that the coming of Mary to her people with her son, as stated in this verse, relates to a time when Jesus had grown sufficiently old to have been raised to the dignity of a prophet, and to have received Divine revelation in the form of a book, (as he speaks of having been given the book in v. 30). The commentators, merely because the verse follows one in which the birth of Jesus is spoken of, understand the verse to relate to a time when Jesus was as yet a baby. But it should be noted that the Holy Quran does not relate stories in all their details, and often omits a number of incidents which are not needed for its purpose. Compare, for instance, the 11th and 12th verses, the first of which relates only Zacharias' receiving the joyful news of a son, while the second asks that son to take hold of the book with strength. Moreover, it is too unreasonable to suppose that as soon as Mary gave birth to the child, she took it to her people to make a show of it. The Quran, v. 22, states that she was then going to some remote place, and thus the incident related here could not have taken place immediately after delivery. *Carrying* does not necessarily imply carrying in arms; see 9 : 92. Jesus was riding an ass at the time.

[2] The words *ab* (father), *akh* (brother), *ukht* (sister) do not necessarily imply real father, etc., and are used very broadly. Ibn-i-Jarir relates the following incident. Safiyya (the Prophet's wife) came to the Apostle of God and said: "Women say to me, A Jewess, daughter of two Jews." He said to her: "Why didst thou not say, My father is Aaron and my uncle is Moses and my husband is Muhammad?" This incident shows clearly that a woman belonging to the Jewish race was spoken of as being immediately related to Aaron and Moses. Hence if Mary is called the sister of Aaron, it is perfectly in accordance with the liberal use of the word *ukht* in Arabic, and to call it an anachronism is to show ignorance of the Arabic idiom. Mary belonged to the priestly class, and hence she is called the sister of Aaron. And there is a saying of the Holy Prophet, I am the prayer of my *father* Abraham.

[3] Old and learned Jews would no doubt speak of a young man who was born and brought up before their eyes as *one who was but yesterday a child in the cradle*, as if disdaining to address one so young. It should be noted that they speak of Jesus as one who *was* (not *is*) a boy in the cradle.

[4] It is absurd to suppose that prayers and alms had been enjoined on Jesus while he was yet a day old and that he really observed these injunctions at that age. In fact, Jesus' answer clearly shows that he was addressing his people after he had been entrusted with the mission of prophethood, and he does not say a word about his having been born without the agency of a male parent.

mother,[1] and He has not made me insolent, unblessed:
33 And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the
day I die, and on the day I am raised to life. 34 Such
is Jesus, son of Mary; (this is) the saying of truth about
which they dispute. 35 It beseems not God that He
should take to Himself a son, glory be to Him; when He
has decreed a matter, He only says to it "Be," and it is.
36 And surely God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore
serve Him; this is the right path. 37 But parties from
among them disagreed with each other, so woe to those
who disbelieve, because of presence on a great day.
38 How clearly shall they hear and how clearly shall they
see on the day when they come to Us; but the unjust
this day are in manifest error. 39 And warn them of
the day of intense regret, when the matter shall have been
decided; and they are (now) in negligence and they do not
believe. 40 Surely We inherit the earth and all those
who are on it, and to Us they shall be returned.

SECTION 3.—Abraham

41 And mention Abraham in the Book; he was a truth-
ful man, a prophet. 42 When he said to his sire: O
my sire! why dost thou worship what neither hears nor
sees, nor does it avail thee in the least: 43 O my sire!
truly the knowledge has come to me which has not come
to thee, therefore follow me, I will guide thee on a right
path: 44 O my sire! serve not the devil, for the devil
is disobedient to the Beneficent God: 45 O my sire!
I fear that a punishment from the Beneficent God should
afflict thee so that thou shouldst be a friend of the devil.
46 He said: Dost thou dislike my gods, O Abraham?
If thou dost not desist I will certainly stone thee, and
leave me for a time. 47 He said: Peace be on thee; I
will pray my Lord to forgive thee; for He is ever Affec-
tionate to me: 48 And I will withdraw from you and

[1] Joseph was already an old man when he married Mary, and by the time that the ministry of Jesus begins we find no mention of him even in the Gospels, the mother and brothers being the only relations mentioned; or the mother alone is mentioned because the Gospels relate an incident showing that Jesus was rude to his mother (Matt. 12 : 48), and this verse disproves the statement, it being one of the objects of the Quran to clear Jesus of all false charges.

what you call on besides God and I will call upon my Lord; maybe I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord.' 49 So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped besides God, We gave to him Isaac and Jacob,[1] and each one of them We made a prophet. 50 And We granted to them of Our mercy, and We left (behind them) a truthful mention of eminence for them.

SECTION 4.—Other Prophets and later Generations

51 And mention Moses in the Book; he was one purified, and he was an apostle, a prophet.[2] 52 And We called to him from the blessed side of the mountain, and We made him draw nigh, holding communion (with Us). 53 And We gave to him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron, a prophet. 54 And mention Ishmael in the Book; he was truthful in (his) promise, and he was an apostle, a prophet. 55 And he enjoined on his family prayer and alms-giving, and was one in whom his Lord was well pleased. 56 And mention Idris in the Book; he was a truthful man, a prophet, 57 And We raised him to an elevated state.[3] 58 These are they on whom God bestowed favours, from among the prophets of the seed of Abraham and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose; when the communications of the Beneficent God were recited to them, they fell down prostrating (themselves) and weeping. 59 But there came after them an evil generation, who wasted prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will meet perdition, 60 Except such as repent and believe and do good, these shall enter

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[1] It is elsewhere made clear that Jacob was his grandson (11 : 71; 21 : 72). Of Moses it is said a few verses further on, *We gave to him his brother Aaron, a prophet*, though Aaron was older than Moses.

[2] The doctrine of the sinlessness of prophets is clearly maintained in this chapter. John was pure and never disobeyed God (v. 13, 14); Abraham was truthful (v. 41); Moses was purified (v. 51); Ishmael was one in whom God was well pleased (v. 55).

[3] Idris is the same as Enoch. The Bible supposes him to have been translated to heaven; see Gen. 5 : 24 and and Heb. 11 : 5. The Quran corrects the error by saying that he was not raised bodily, but to an elevated state. Thus in Gen. 5 : 24: "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The New Testament is plainer yet: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him" (Heb. 11 : 5). Only once again is he mentioned in the Holy Quran, viz. in 21 : 85

the garden, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in
any way: 61 The gardens of perpetuity which the Bene-
ficent God has promised to His servants while unseen;
surely His promise shall come to pass. 62 They shall
not hear therein any vain discourse, but only, Peace,
and they shall have their sustenance therein morning and
evening. 63 This is the garden which We cause those of
Our servants to inherit who guard (against evil). 64 And
we do not descend but by the command of thy Lord; to
Him belongs whatever is before us and whatever is behind
us and whatever is between these, and thy Lord is not
forgetful.[1] 65 The Lord of the heavens and the earth
and what is between them, so serve Him and be patient
in His service. Dost thou know any one equal to Him?

SECTION 5.—The Opponents of Prophets

66 And says man: What! when I am dead, shall I
truly be brought forth alive? 67 Does not man remem-
ber that We created him before, when he was nothing?
68 So by thy Lord! We will certainly gather them together
and the devils, then shall We cause them to be present
round hell on their knees. 69 Then We will draw forth
from every sect of them him who is most exorbitantly
rebellious against the Beneficent God. 70 Again, We do
know best those who deserve most to be burned therein.
71 And there is not one of you but shall come to it; this
is an unavoidable decree of thy Lord.[2] 72 Again, We
will deliver those who guarded (against evil), and We
will leave the unjust therein on their knees. 73 And
when Our clear communications are recited to them, those
who disbelieve say to those who believe: Which of the
two parties is best in abiding and best in assembly?

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[1] The words "we do not descend" are generally understood to refer to the coming of angels with Divine revelation. There is no doubt that the reference here is to the revelation of the Holy Prophet, the significance being that, as the angels brought revelation to previous prophets, so they now bring revelation, by the command of the Lord, to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The concluding words of the verse, *and Thy Lord is not forgetful*, are meant to signify that the promises and prophecies made by God through His prophets could not be forgotten.

[2] The *wicked* only are spoken of, as the context shows clearly. See **21 : 102**, where we are told that the righteous shall not hear the *faintest sound of hell*

74 And how many of the generations have We destroyed
before them who were better in riches and appearance!
75 Say: As for him who remains in error, the Beneficent
God will prolong his length of days, until they see what
they were threatened with, either the chastisement or
the hour; then they shall know who is in more evil plight
and weaker in forces.[1] 76 And God increases in guidance
those who go aright; and ever-abiding good works are
with thy Lord best in recompense and best in yielding
fruit. 77 Hast thou seen him who disbelieves in Our
communications and says: I shall certainly be given
wealth and children? 78 Has he gained knowledge of
the unseen, or made a covenant with the Beneficent God?
79 By no means! We write down what he says, and
We will lengthen to him the length of his chastisement.
80 And We will inherit of him what he says,[2] and he shall
come to Us alone. 81 And they have taken gods besides
God that they should be to them a source of strength;
82 By no means! they shall soon deny their worshipping
them, and they shall be adversaries to them.

SECTION 6.—Doctrine of Sonship

83 Dost thou not see that We have sent the devils
against the unbelievers, inciting them by incitement?
84 Therefore be not in haste against them, We only number
out to them a number (of days). 85 The day on which
We will gather those who guard (against evil) to the Benefi-
cent God to receive honours, 86 And We will drive the
guilty to hell thirsty. 87 They shall not control inter-
cession, save he who has made a covenant with the Bene-
ficent God. 88 And they say: The Beneficent God has
taken (to Himself) a son. 89 Certainly you have made an
abominable assertion: 90 The heavens may almost be
rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the moun-
tains fall down in pieces, 91 That they ascribe a son to
the Beneficent God. 92 And it is not worthy of the

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[1] The *hour* signifies *the hour of doom*, the time when they shall be utterly destroyed, their power departing from them once for all. The *chastisement*, in comparison with the *doom*, signifies a lighter punishment. "Weaker in forces" clearly contains a prophetic reference to the wars between the Muslims and their persecutors.

[2] I.e. his wealth and children; see v. 77.

Beneficent God that He should take (to Himself) a son.[1]
93 There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will
come to the Beneficent God as a servant. 94 He has a
comprehensive knowledge of them, and has numbered
them a (comprehensive) numbering. 95 And every one
of them will come to Him on the day of resurrection alone.
96 (As for) those who believe and do good deeds, for
them will God bring about love.[2] 97 So We have only
made it easy in thy tongue that thou mayest give good
news thereby to those who guard (against evil) and warn
thereby a vehemently contentious people. 98 And how
many a generation have We destroyed before them!
Dost thou see any one of them or hear a sound of them?

CHAPTER 20

TÁ HÁ

(*Mecca*—8 *sections*; 135 *verses*)

THE initial letters of this chapter serve as its title. The greater part of it is devoted to the story of Moses, which is here given in detail. As the last chapter deals at length with the story of Jesus, this, dealing as it does in detail with the story of Moses, is placed after. It opens with a comforting message to the Holy Prophet, to the effect that he should not be disheartened by the bitter opposition to his preaching because his mission would assuredly be crowned with prosperity. The first five sections (out of a total of eight) are taken up with the story of Moses, the Prophet's mission being introduced towards the close of the fifth section. The remaining three sections are taken up with the description of the opposition to the Prophet and the consequences of that opposition.

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1 The five verses 89–92 contain a most emphatic and clear condemnation of the Christian doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and it is to this that this chapter particularly refers. It may be noted that this chapter belongs to about the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's mission, and thus Islam had set before itself from the very first the grand object of the reformation of Christianity. The taking of a son is here said to be against His attribute of *rahmániyyat*, because the son is required as a compensation for the sins of humanity according to the Christian doctrine, while *rahmániyyat* means that He can forgive a sinner without requiring any compensation from him.

2 God's bringing about *love* for the righteous means that He loves them Himself and inspires a love for them in the hearts of other people, while they also love God as well as their fellow-beings.

SECTION 1.—**Moses is called**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O man![1] 2 We have not revealed the Quran to
thee that thou mayest be unsuccessful.[2] 3 Nay, it is a
reminder to him who fears: 4 A revelation from Him Who
created the earth and the high heavens. 5 The Beneficent
God holds control on the throne. 6 His is what is in the
heavens and what is in the earth and what is between
them two and what is beneath the ground. 7 And if
thou utter the saying aloud, then surely He knows the
secret, and what is yet more hidden. 8 God—there is no
god but He; His are the very best names. 9 And has
the story of Moses come to thee? 10 When he saw fire,
he said to his family: Stop, for I see a fire, haply I may
bring to you therefrom a live coal or find a guidance at
the fire. 11 When he came to it, a voice was uttered:
O Moses! 12 I am thy Lord, therefore put off thy shoes,[3]
for thou art in the sacred valley *Tuwá*: 13 And I have
chosen thee, so listen to what is revealed: 14 I am God,
there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up
prayer for My remembrance: 15 The hour is surely coming
—I am about to make it manifest—so that every soul
may be rewarded as it strives: 16 Therefore let not him
who believes not in it and follows his low desires turn thee
away from it, so that thou shouldst perish: 17 And what
is this in thy right hand, O Moses! 18 He said: This
is my staff; I recline on it and I beat the leaves with it
to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses
for it. 19 He said: Cast it down, O Moses! 20 So he
cast it down, and lo! it was a serpent running. 21 He
said: Take hold of it and fear not; We will restore it to
its former state: 22 And press thy hand to thy side, it shall

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[1] *Táhá*, a combination of the two letters *tá* and *há* of the alphabet, means according to most of the earliest commentators, *O man*.

[2] It is a consolation to the Holy Prophet, and at the same time a clear prophecy that a mighty transformation will be brought about, not only in Arabia but in the whole of the world, for that was the object which the Holy Quran had set out to accomplish from the first.

[3] The command to put off the shoes is a metaphorical expression for *making the heart vacant from care for family and property*. According to others, "it is a command to stay."

come out white without evil, another sign :[1] 23 That We
may show thee of Our greater signs : 24 Go to Pharaoh, for
he has exceeded all limits.

SECTION 2.—**Moses goes to Pharaoh**

25 He said : O my Lord ! expand my breast for me :
26 And make my affair easy to me : 27 And loose the
knot from my tongue :[2] 28 (That) they may understand
my word : 29 And give to me an aider from my family :
30 Aaron, my brother : 31 Strengthen my back by him :
32 And associate him (with me) in my affair : 33 So that
we may glorify Thee much : 34 And remember Thee oft :
35 Surely Thou art seeing us. 36 He said : Thou art
granted thy petition, O Moses : 37 And certainly We
bestowed on thee a favour at another time : 38 When We
revealed to thy mother what was revealed : 39 Saying :
Put him into a chest, then cast it down into the river, the
river shall throw him on the shore ; there shall take him
up one who is an enemy to Me and enemy to him ; and
I cast down upon thee love from Me, and that thou mightest
be brought up before My eyes. 40 When thy sister went
and said : Shall I direct you to one who will take charge
of him ? So We brought thee back to thy mother, that
her eye might be cooled and she should not grieve ; and
thou didst kill a man, then We delivered thee from the
grief, and We tried thee with (a severe) trying. Then
thou didst stay for years among the people of Midian ;
then thou camest hither as ordained, O Moses : 41 And
I have chosen thee for Myself : 42 Go thou and thy
brother with My communications and be not remiss in
remembering Me : 43 Go both to Pharaoh, for he has
become inordinate : 44 And speak to him a gentle word,
haply he may mind or fear. 45 They said : O our Lord !
we fear that he may hasten to do evil to us or that he may
become inordinate. 46 He said : Fear not, I am with
you both ; I do hear and see : 47 So go you both to

[1] All this was experienced by Moses in that particular state in which the recipient of a revelation finds himself at the time of the revelation. And what was shown had a deeper significance, as stated in v. 23. See note on 7 : 108. It may be added here that *yad-i-baidá*, rendered as *white hand*, means, according to Tajul Urus, ***an argument made very clear.***

[2] It is a prayer to be able to speak freely.

him and say: We are two apostles of thy Lord; therefore send the children of Israel with us and do not torment them! Indeed we have brought to thee a communication from thy Lord, and peace is on him who follows the guidance:
48 It has been revealed to us that the chastisement will come upon him who rejects and turns back.
49 (Pharaoh) said: And who is your Lord, O Moses?
50 He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).
51 He said: Then what is the state of the former generations?
52 He said: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a book: my Lord errs not, nor does He forget:
53 Who made the earth for you an expanse and made for you therein paths and sent down water from the cloud, then thereby We have brought forth many species of various herbs:
54 Eat and pasture your cattle; surely there are signs in this for those endowed with understanding.

SECTION 3.—Moses and the Enchanters

55 From it We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it will We raise you a second time.
56 And truly We showed him Our signs, all of them, but he rejected and refused.
57 Said he: Hast thou come to us that thou shouldst turn us out of our land by thy enchantment, O Moses?
58 So we too will produce before thee enchantment like it, therefore make between us and thee an appointment, which we should not break, (neither) we nor thou, (in) a central place.
59 (Moses) said: Your appointment is the day of the Festival, and let the people be gathered together in the early forenoon.
60 So Pharaoh turned away and settled his plan, then came.
61 Moses said to them: Woe to you! do not forge a lie against God lest He destroy you by a chastisement, and he who forges (a lie) indeed fails to attain (his desire).
62 And they disputed with one another about their affair and kept the discourse secret.
63 They said: These are surely two enchanters who wish to turn you out from your land by their enchantment and to take away your most exemplary usage.
64 Therefore settle your plan, then come standing in ranks, and he will prosper indeed this day who overcomes.
65 They said: O Moses! wilt

thou cast, or shall we be the first who cast down?
66 He said: Nay! cast down. Then lo! their cords and their rods—it was imaged to him on account of their enchantment as if they were running.
67 Moses conceived in his mind a fear.
68 We said: Fear not, thou shalt be the uppermost:
69 And cast down what is in thy right hand; it shall devour what they have wrought; they have wrought only the plan of an enchanter, and the enchanter shall not be successful wheresoever he may come from.
70 And the enchanters were cast down making obeisance; they said: We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses.
71 (Pharaoh) said: You believe in him before I give you leave; surely he is the chief of you who taught you enchantment, therefore I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you on the trunks of the palm-trees, and you will come to know which of us is the more severe and the more abiding in chastising.
72 They said: We do not prefer thee to what has come to us of clear arguments and to Him who made us; therefore decide what thou art going to decide; thou canst only decide about this world's life:
73 We believe in our Lord that He may forgive us our sins and the enchantment to which thou didst compel us; and God is better and more abiding.
74 Whoever comes to his Lord (being) guilty, for him is hell; he shall not die therein, nor shall he live.[1]
75 And whoever comes to Him a believer (and) he has done good deeds indeed, these it is who shall have the high ranks,
76 The gardens of perpetuity, in which rivers flow, to abide therein; and this is the reward of him who purifies himself.

SECTION 4.—**Moses and his People**

77 And We revealed to Moses, saying: Travel by night with My servants, then make for them a dry path in the sea, not fearing to be overtaken, nor being afraid.
78 And Pharaoh followed them with his armies, so there came upon them of the sea that which came upon them.
79 And Pharaoh led astray his people and he did not

[1] Those in hell shall not live, because life shall be granted only to those who are reborn in this life, nor shall they die, because death would mean the cessation of their torment.

guide (them) aright. 80 O children of Israel! indeed We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a covenant with you on the blessed side of the mountain, and We sent to you the manna and the quails. 81 Eat of the good things We have given you for sustenance, and be not inordinate in it, lest My wrath come down upon you, and on whomsoever My wrath comes down, he shall perish indeed. 82 And surely I am most Forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good, then continues to follow the right direction. 83 And what caused thee to hasten from thy people, O Moses? 84 He said: They are here on my track and I hastened on to Thee, my Lord, that Thou mightest be pleased. 85 He said: We have tried thy people after thee, and the Samiri has led them astray.[1] 86 So Moses returned to his people wrathful, sorrowing. Said he: O my people! did not your Lord promise you a goodly promise? Did then the time seem long to you, or did you wish that the wrath of your Lord should come down upon you, so that you broke (your) promise to me? 87 They said: We did not break (our) promise to thee of our own accord, but we were made to bear the burdens of the ornaments of the people, then we cast them away, and thus did the Samiri suggest.[2] 88 So he brought forth for them a calf, a (mere) body, which had a hollow sound, and they said: This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot. 89 What! could they not see that it did not return to them a reply, and (that) it did not control any harm or benefit for them.

SECTION 5.—**Moses and the Calf**

90 And certainly Aaron had said to them before: O my people! you are only tried by it, and your Lord is the

[1] Whether this Samiri was some ancestor of the Samaritans or not need not be discussed. The verse only shows that some person other than Aaron was responsible for making the calf. From Rabbinical literature (see *Jewish En.*, Art. "Calf") it appears that the Egyptians who had come with the Israelites were foremost in demanding the making of the calf. And Ata held that he was an Egyptian who believed in Moses and came along with the Israelites.

[2] The Israelites may have borrowed ornaments from the Egyptians, as is affirmed in Exod. 12 : 35, and the reference may here be to those ornaments, or the significance may simply be that the nomadic tribes of Israel,

Beneficent God, therefore follow me and obey my order.[1]
91 They said: We will by no means cease to keep to its
worship until Moses returns to us. 92 (Moses) said:
O Aaron! what prevented thee, when thou sawest them
going astray, 93 That thou didst not follow me? Didst
thou disobey my order? 94 He said: O son of my mother!
seize me not by my beard nor by my head; I was afraid lest
thou shouldst say, Thou hast caused a division among the
children of Israel and not waited for my word. 95 He
said: What was then thy object, O Samiri? 96 He
said: I saw what they did not see, so I followed only partly
the way of the apostle, then I cast it away;[2] thus did my
soul embellish (it) to me. 97 He said: Begone then; for
thee it will be in this life to say, Touch (me) not; and
there is a threat for thee, which shall not be made to
fail to thee; and look at thy god to whose worship thou
didst keep (so long); we will burn it, then we will scatter it
a (wide) scattering in the sea.[3] 98 Your God is only God,
there is no god but He; He comprehends all things in
(His) knowledge. 99 Thus do We relate to thee (some)
of the news of what has gone before; and indeed We have
given to thee a Reminder from Ourselves. 100 Whoever
turns aside from it, he shall bear a burden on the day of
resurrection, 101 Abiding in this (state), and evil will it
be for them to bear on the day of resurrection; 102 On
the day when the trumpet shall be blown, and We will
gather the guilty, blue-eyed, on that day;[4] 103 They
shall consult together secretly: You did tarry but ten

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who were unaccustomed to these things, had imbibed these habits from the Egyptians, and now gave up those ornaments at the suggestion of the Samiri.

[1] From this it is clear that not only had Aaron no part in making the calf, but he even enjoined his people to give up its worship. The Quran here differs from the Bible.

[2] The words here are *asar-ir-rasúl*, which literally mean the way or the footprints of the apostle; the *footprints of the horse of Gabriel* is an innovation.

[3] This shows that the ashes of the calf were thrown into the sea, and the story of the Israelites being made to drink of water mixed with the ashes of the calf (Exod. 32:20, Deut. 9:21) is not, therefore, credited by the Holy Quran. The punishment given to the Samiri is that of an outcast in society, who is prohibited from having any intercourse or relations with the Israelite people.

[4] The word *zurqá* means *blue-eyed.* Whether it is an indication of the actual appearance of certain nations cannot be definitely said. The word may also signify *blind.*

(centuries).[1] 104 We know best what they say, when
the fairest of them in course would say: You tarried but
a day.

SECTION 6.—**Opponents shall be brought low**

105 And they ask thee about the mountains. Say:
My Lord will carry them away from the roots, 106 Then
leave it a plain, smooth level,[2] 107 Thou shalt not see
therein any crookedness or unevenness. 108 On that
day they shall follow the inviter, there is no crookedness
in him,[3] and the voices shall be low before the Beneficent
God so that thou shalt not hear aught but a soft sound.
109 On that day shall no intercession avail except of him
whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is
pleased with. 110 He knows what is before them and
what is behind them, while they do not comprehend it in
knowledge. 111 And the faces shall be humbled before
the Living, the Self-subsistent God, and he who bears
iniquity is indeed undone. 112 And whoever does good
works and he is a believer, he shall have no fear of in-
justice nor of the withholding of his due. 113 And thus
have We sent it down an Arabic Quran, and have distinctly
set forth therein of threats that they may guard (against
evil) or that it may produce a reminder for them.
114 Supremely Exalted is therefore God, the King, the
Truth; and do not make haste with the Quran before
its revelation is made complete to thee and say: O my

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[1] The object of *'ashrá* is omitted; but, as elsewhere the lovers of the world are described as loving to *be granted a life of a thousand years* (2 : 96), and they are told that even their being granted such a long life will in no way remove them further off from the chastisement, what is apparently indicated here is that they shall have enjoyed ten centuries of great prosperity. Or, if the word *days* is understood, the ten days of the life of a nation would also mean ten centuries. *A day* of the next verse supports this conclusion, as a *day* in prophetical language stands for a thousand years; see 22 : 47.

[2] The word *jabal* means *a mountain*, as well as the *lord* or *chief of a people*. Even if the first significance is adopted, the meaning would be the removal of obstacles, like mountains, in the spread of truth. V. 108 makes this meaning clear because there they are spoken of as following the *Inviter*, i.e. the Holy Prophet who invited them to the truth.

[3] The inviter in whom there is no crookedness is no other than the Holy Prophet; see 18 : 1. The whole verse clearly points to a time when Islam should be completely established, and instead of opposition *the voices should be low* before the Beneficent God. The lowness of the voice indicates submission.

Lord! increase me in knowledge.[1] 115 And certainly
We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he
forgot; and We did not find in him any determination
(to disobey).[2]

SECTION 7.—The Devil's misleading

116 And when We said to the angels: Make obeisance
to Adam, they made obeisance, but Iblis (did it not); he
refused. 117 So We said: O Adam! this is an enemy to
thee and to thy wife; therefore let him not drive you both
forth from the garden so that thou shouldst be unhappy:
118 For it is (ordained) for thee that thou shalt not be
hungry therein nor bare of clothing; 119 And that thou
shalt not be thirsty therein nor shalt thou feel the heat
of the sun.[3] 120 But the devil made an evil suggestion
to him; he said: O Adam! shall I guide thee to the
tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?
121 And they both ate of it, so their evil inclinations
became manifest to them, and they both began to cover
themselves with leaves of the garden, and Adam dis-
obeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him). 122 Then
his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him).
123 He said: Get forth you two therefrom, all (of you),
one of you (is) enemy to another. So there will surely
come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My
guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy; [4] 124 And
whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall surely
be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of
resurrection, blind.[5] 125 He shall say: My Lord! why
hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?
126 He will say: Even so; Our communications came

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[1] The making haste with the Quran signifies the Holy Prophet's desire that the warning to the unbelievers may be given in clear words, so that they may benefit by it.

[2] This shows that Adam's fault was not intentional, and hence no sin can be attributed to him on this ground.

[3] Apparently the words relate to physical comforts, but that spiritual contentment and rest is meant is made clear by v. 124, where a straitened life is stated to be the fate of him who turns away from God's remembrance.

[4] The remedy suggested is spiritual, the coming of guidance. This makes clear the allegorical nature of what is related in the story of Adam.

[5] The *straitened life* is really an unhappy life, which is the result of falling into evil.

to thee, but thou didst neglect them; even thus shalt
thou be forsaken this day. 127 And thus do We recom-
pense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the
communications of his Lord; and certainly the chastise-
ment of the hereafter is severer and more lasting. 128 Does
it not direct them aright how many of the generations in
whose dwelling-places they go about We destroyed before
them? Surely there are signs in this for those endowed
with understanding.

SECTION 8.—**Punishment is certain**

129 And had there not been a word (that had) already
gone forth from thy Lord and an appointed term, it would
surely have been made to cleave (to them). 130 Bear
then patiently what they say; and glorify thy Lord by
the praising of Him before the rising of the sun and before
its setting, and during hours of the night do also glorify
(Him) and during parts of the day, that thou mayest be
well-pleased. 131 And do not stretch thy eyes after
that with which We have provided different classes of
them, of the splendour of this world's life, that We may
thereby try them; and the sustenance of thy Lord is better
and more abiding. 132 And enjoin prayer on thy followers,
and steadily adhere to it; We do not ask thee for sub-
sistence; We do give thee subsistence, and there is a
(good) end to guarding (against evil).[1] 133 And they
say: Why does he not bring to us a sign from his Lord?
Has not there come to them a clear evidence of what is
in the previous books?[2] 134 And had We destroyed
them with chastisement before this, they would have
said: O our Lord! why didst Thou not send to us an
apostle, for then we should have followed Thy communica-
tions before that we met disgrace and shame. 135 Say:
Every one (of us) is awaiting, therefore do await: you
will come to know who is the follower of the even path
and who goes aright.

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[1] The word subsistence in this verse really refers to *prayer*, showing that it is the subsistence on which man's spiritual growth depends.

[2] The Holy Quran is here called a clear evidence of what is contained in the previous books, because it fulfils their prophecies and also adduces arguments for the assertions made in them.

PART XVII

CHAPTER 21

AL-ANBIYÂ: THE PROPHETS

(Mecca—7 sections; 112 verses)

WHILE this chapter is devoted in part to general statements regarding the deliverance of the prophets and the ultimate triumph of their cause, and hence it goes under the name of *Al-Anbiyá*, the history of Abraham, the great father of numerous prophets, is particularly referred to, as affording an example nearer to the case of the Holy Prophet than the example of any other prophet.

As I have already stated, from the 17th to the 23rd is one group of seven chapters. The first chapter of this group, while promising Islam a great future, cites the example of the Israelites and in what manner they were dealt with. This is followed by that which deals with the history of Christianity, then by one giving prominence to the histories of John and Jesus, a fourth dealing chiefly with the history of Moses. Naturally, then, these chapters should have been followed by the history of that great patriarch who is the father of both the Israelites and the Ishmaelites. Another phase of this chapter is the deliverance of the righteous, even as the punishment of the wicked is the distinguishing characteristic of the four that precede it.

The chapter begins with the certainty of the punishment of the Meccans, and is followed by a clear declaration that the judgment approaches and the reckoning is nigh. This is borne out by the fact that truth must triumph now as it has always done, and this is shown in the second section. The third draws attention to the truth of revelation in general, and the revelation of the Prophet is particular. The fourth calls attention to the predominance of mercy in Divine nature, for merciful dealing was specially to mark the punishment of the Holy Prophet's opponents, and in this respect Abraham was to be his prototype, whose history forms the subject-matter of the next section. The sixth shows how prophets have always been delivered from the hands of their enemies in the most critical circumstances, and the last adds that the righteous are made to inherit the land, specially referring to the Holy Land, which was now promised to the Muslims as righteousness had departed from the house of Israel.

SECTION 1.—Judgment approaches

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Their reckoning has drawn near to the people, and in
heedlessness are they turning aside. 2 There comes not
to them a new reminder from their Lord but they hear
it while they sport, 3 Their hearts trifling; and those

who are unjust counsel together in secret: He is nothing but a mortal like yourselves; what! will you then yield to enchantment while you see? 4 He said: My Lord knows what is spoken in the heaven and the earth, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 5 Nay! say they: Medleys of dreams; nay! he has forged it; nay! he is a poet; so let him bring to us a sign as the former (prophets) were sent (with).[1] 6 There did not believe before them any town which We destroyed; will they then believe? 7 And We did not send before thee any but men to whom We sent revelation, so ask the followers of the reminder if you do not know. 8 And We did not give them bodies not eating the food, and they were not to abide (for ever).[2] 9 Then We made Our promise good to them, so We delivered them and whom We pleased, and We destroyed the extravagant. 10 Certainly We have revealed to you a book in which is your eminence; what! do you not then understand? [3]

SECTION 2.—Triumph of Truth

11 And how many a town which was iniquitous did We demolish, and We raised up after it another people! 12 So when they felt Our punishment, lo! they began to fly from it. 13 Do not fly (now) and come back to what you were made to lead easy lives in and to your dwellings, haply you will be questioned. 14 They said: O woe to us! we were unjust. 15 And this ceased not

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[1] The Quraish seem to have been quite puzzled. They first call it enchantment, referring to its powerful eloquence which attracted them notwithstanding their opposition to it. But there were prophecies which mere eloquence could not produce, so they called it *medleys of dreams*. Then they thought that there was a settled purpose therein, by reason of its asserting the Prophet's triumph and the discomfiture of his powerful enemies, so they called it an intentional *forgery*; and lastly, as if to devise one word combining all these, they called it the work of a *poet*. Then they demand a sign the like of what was given to the former prophets, meaning their destruction and his triumph, because the Quran had repeatedly called their attention to the fate of those who had rejected the truth before them.

[2] This shows clearly that every prophet had a mortal body needing food for its support, and that every one of them tasted of death. Therefore, Jesus also must have had a body which stood in need of food and must have tasted of death.

[3] Why should they again and again demand the threatened punishment, when they could become a great and eminent nation by following the Holy Quran?

to be their cry till We made them cut off, extinct. 16 And
We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is
between them for sport. 17 Had We wished to make a
diversion, We would have made it from before Ourselves:
by no means would We do (it).[1] 18 Nay! We cast the
truth against the falsehood, so that it breaks its head, and
lo! it vanishes; and woe to you for what you describe.[2]
19 And whoever is in the heavens and the earth is His;
and those who are with Him are not proud to serve Him,
nor do they grow weary. 20 They glorify (Him) by
night and day: they are never languid. 21 Or have they
taken gods from the earth who raise (the dead)? 22 If
there had been in them any gods except God, they
would both have been in a state of disorder; therefore
glory be to God, the Lord of the throne, above what they
attribute (to Him). 23 He cannot be questioned concern-
ing what He does and they shall be questioned. 24 Or,
have they taken gods besides Him? Say: Bring your
proof; this is the reminder of those with me and the
reminder of those before me. Nay! most of them do
not know the truth, so they turn aside. 25 And We did
not send before thee any apostle but We revealed to him
that there is no god but Me, therefore serve Me. 26 And
they say: The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son.
Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honoured servants;
27 They do not precede Him in speech and (only) accord-
ing to His commandment do they act.[3] 28 He knows
what is before them and what is behind them, and they
do not intercede except for him whom He approves, and
for fear of Him they tremble. 29 And whoever of them

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[1] *Diversion* in this verse carries the same significance as *sporting* in the previous verse. The meaning is that the whole of nature shows that there is a serious purpose in the creation. So man must also take everything seriously, and know that every deed that he does must produce an effect. The commentators, however, add that *lahw*, in the dialect of Yeman, signifies *wife* or *child*, and thus the statement made in the verse is a refutation of the Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ is the son of God. The meaning in this case would be that God does not take to Himself a son.

[2] This statement is the logical sequence of the statement in the two previous verses: truth in nature is always prevailing against falsehood.

[3] This verse gives us a conclusive testimony as to the sinlessness of prophets. Both their words and their deeds are in accordance with Divine commandments. The context shows clearly that the verse speaks of prophets, not of angels

should say, I am a god besides Him, such a one do We recompense with hell; thus do We recompense the unjust.

SECTION 3.—Truth of Revelation

30 Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, and We have opened them;[1] and We have made of water every thing living; will they not then believe? 31 And We have made great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with them, and We have made in it wide ways that they may follow a right direction. 32 And We have made the heaven a guarded canopy and (yet) they turn aside from its signs.[2] 33 And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres. 34 And We did not ordain abiding for any mortal before thee. What! then if thou diest, will they abide? 35 Every soul must taste of death; and We try you by evil and good by way of probation; and to Us you shall be brought back. 36 And when those who disbelieve see thee, they do not take thee but for one to be scoffed at: Is this he who speaks of your gods? And they are deniers at the mention of the Beneficent God. 37 Man is created of haste;[3] now will I show you My signs, therefore do not ask Me to hasten (them) on. 38 And they say: When will this threat come to pass if you are truthful? 39 Had those who disbelieve but known (of the time) when they shall not be able to ward off the fire from their faces nor from their backs, nor shall they be helped. 40 Nay, it shall come on them all of a sudden and cause them to become

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[1] This is true both physically and spiritually. The present highly complicated but completely regulated system of the universe has no doubt been developed out of a state of chaos; and that water is the source of life is equally true. Similarly, Divine revelation has in all ages been a source of spiritual life, and the moral chaos prevailing in Arabia gave place to a highly developed nation through the Quran.

[2] Arabia had its spiritualists, the astrologers and the diviners who pretended to have access to the secrets of heaven. They are told that they cannot have any such access. Or the meaning may be that revelation (being called here *heaven*) is guarded against all attacks.

[3] So prominent is the characteristic of haste in man that he may be said to have been created, as it were, of very haste. The expression is explained by what follows: *Now will I show to you My signs, therefore do not ask Me to hasten them on.*

confounded, so they shall not have the power to avert it,
nor shall they be respited. 41 And apostles before thee
were also scoffed at, then there befell those of them who
scoffed that at which they had scoffed.

SECTION 4.—God's dealing is merciful

42 Say: Who guards you by night and by day from
the Beneficent God? Nay, they turn aside at the men-
tion of their Lord. 43 Or, have they gods who can defend
them against Us? They shall not be able to assist them-
selves, nor shall they be guarded from Us. 44 Nay, We
gave provision to these and their fathers until life was
prolonged to them. Do they not see that We are visiting
the land, curtailing it of its sides? Shall they then pre-
vail? [1] 45 Say: I warn you only by revelation; and
the deaf do not hear the call whenever they are warned.
46 And if a blast of the chastisement of thy Lord were
to touch them, they will say: O woe to us! we were un-
just. 47 And We will set up a just balance on the day of
resurrection, so no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the
least; and though there be the weight of a grain of mustard
seed, (yet) will We bring it, and sufficient are We to take
account. 48 And We gave to Moses and Aaron the dis-
tinction and a light and a reminder for those who guard
(against evil); 49 (For) those who fear their Lord in
secret and they are fearful of the hour. 50 And this is a
blessed Reminder which We have revealed; will you then
deny it?

SECTION 5.—Abraham and his Opponents

51 And We gave to Abraham his rectitude before, and
We knew him fully well. 52 When he said to his sire
and his people: What are these images to whose worship
you cleave? 53 They said: We found our fathers wor-
shipping them. 54 He said: Certainly you have been,
(both) you and your fathers, in manifest error. 55 They
said: Hast thou brought to us the truth, or art thou one
of the triflers? 56 He said: Nay! your Lord is the

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[1] Notwithstanding the severest opposition, Islam was winning its way in Arabia. Its principles were finding a way into the hearts of the people, and this was a sure sign that all opposition was bound to come to naught.

Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who brought them into existence, and I am of those who bear witness to this. 57 And, by God! I will certainly strive against your idols after you go away, turning back. 58 So he broke them into pieces, except the chief of them, that haply they may return to Him.[1] 59 They said: Who has done this to our gods? Surely he is one of the unjust. 60 They said: We heard a youth called Abraham speak of them. 61 Said they: Then bring him before the eyes of the people, perhaps they may bear witness. 62 They said: Hast thou done this to our gods, O Abraham? 63 He said: Surely (some doer) has done it; the chief of them is this, therefore ask them, if they can speak.[2] 64 Then they turned to themselves and said: You yourselves are the unjust; 65 Then they were made to hang down their heads: Certainly thou knowest that they do not speak. 66 He said: What! do you serve besides God what brings you not any benefit, nor does it harm you? 67 Fie on you and on what you serve besides God; what! do you not understand? 68 They said: Burn him and help your gods, if you are going to do (anything). 69 We said: O fire! be a comfort and peace to Abraham;[3] 70 And they desired a war on him, but We made them the greatest losers. 71 And We delivered him as well as Lot, (removing them) to the land which We had blessed for all people. 72 And We gave him Isaac, and Jacob, a son's son, and We made (them) all good. 73 And We made them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms, and Us (alone) did they serve; 74 And to Lot, We gave wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which wrought abominations; surely they were an evil, trans-

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[1] The personal pronoun refers to God; the meaning being that finding their idols broken to pieces, they may ponder and come to the conclusion that they could not be gods.

[2] Abraham does not refer them to the great idol, but tells them that they should ask the idols themselves. He simply points out that the great idol is still safe, but he cannot help his worhippers in the least.

[3] The Holy Quran does not say whether Abraham was actually cast into fire. Here as well as in 29:24 and 37:97 it only speaks of their intention to cast him into fire. He was, however, delivered by Divine help, and reached another land in safety.

gressing people; 75 And We took him into Our mercy; for he was of the good.

SECTION 6.—Deliverance of Prophets

76 And Noah, when he cried aforetime, so We answered him, and delivered him and his followers from the great calamity. 77 And We helped him against the people who rejected Our communications; they were an evil people, so We drowned them all. 78 And David and Solomon when they gave judgment concerning the field when the people's sheep pastured therein by night, and We were bearers of witness to their judgment. 79 So We made Solomon to understand it; and to each one We gave wisdom and knowledge; and We made the mountains, declaring glory (to Us), and the birds[1] subservient to David; and We were the doers. 80 And We taught him the making of coats of mail for you, that they might protect you in your wars; will you then be grateful? 81 And (We made subservient) to Solomon the wind blowing violent, pursuing its course by His command to the land which We had blessed, and We are knower of all things.[2] 82 And of the devils there were those who dived for him and did other work besides that, and We kept guard over them;[3] 83 And Job, when he cried to his Lord, (saying): Harm has afflicted me, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful. 84 So We

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[1] Elsewhere it is stated that everything that exists in the heaven or the earth is made subservient to man (45 : 13). The special mention of coats of mail as used in wars (see next verse)—all three, coats of mail, birds and mountains being again spoken together in 34 : 10, 11—is a clear evidence that the reference here is to the conquests of David, the birds serving the purpose of message-bearers in wars, and the mountains standing for the hill tribes or great men whom he subjugated.

[2] Solomon's fleet did him an important service. According to Biblical history, "with the Phenicians he united in maritime commerce, sending out a fleet once in three years from Ezion-geber, at the head of the gulf of Aqaba, to Ophir, presumably on the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula. From this distant part and others on the way he derived fabulous amounts of gold and tropical products. These revenues gave him almost unlimited means for increasing the glory of his capital city and palace, and for the perfection of his civil and military organization" (*Jewish Ency.*). Also compare 14 : 32: "And He made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command," which is in exact accordance with what is stated here.

[3] The *devils* that dived to bring up pearls from the bottom of the sea were not different from the divers of to-day, though they must have been fiercer and stronger men, because strength had to supply the place of knowledge in those days.

responded to him and took off what harm he had, and
We gave him his followers and the like of them with them :
a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers.[1]
85 And Ishmael and Idris and Zulkifl ; all were of the
patient ones ;[2] 86 And We caused them to enter into
Our mercy ; for they were of the good ones. 87 And
Jonah, when he went away in wrath,[3] and he thought
that We would not straiten him, so he called out among
afflictions : There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee ;
I have made myself suffer loss.[4] 88 So We responded to
him and delivered him from the grief, and thus do We
deliver the believers. 89 And Zacharias, when he cried
to his Lord : O my Lord ! leave me not alone ; and Thou
art the best of inheritors. 90 So We responded to him
and gave him John and made his wife fit for him ; for
they vied, one with another, in deeds of goodness and
called upon Us, hoping and fearing ; and they were humble
before Us. 91 And she who guarded her chastity,[5] so We
breathed into her of Our inspiration and made her and her
son a sign for the nations. 92 This is your community,
one community (only), and I am your Lord, therefore
serve Me.[6] 93 And they cut off their affair between them ;
to Us shall all come back.

SECTION 7.—**Righteous shall inherit the Land**

94 So whoever does good deeds and he is a believer,
there shall be no denying of his exertion, and We write

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[1] Restoring Job's *ahl*, i.e. *followers* or *family*, does not mean that they were raised to life from among the dead, for when a man is separated from his friends or family, we speak of his friends or family being restored to him without entertaining the least idea of their being raised to life from among the dead.

[2] The name given here is Zulkifl, which literally means *one having a portion that would suffice*. The commentators differ in identifying him with one of the Biblical prophets, Zacharias, Elias, or Joshua. Rodwell states, on the authority of Travels of Niebuhr, that the Arabs call Ezekiel by the name of Kifl. The suggestion, therefore, that by Zulkifl is meant the prophet Ezekiel is more sound. This prophet is mentioned only once again, as here without any reference to his history, in 38 : 48.

[3] The Quran is far from teaching that Jonah was wroth with God. Evidently he was wroth with his people because of their stubbornness.

[4] The word *Zulm* in Ar. means *making oneself to suffer loss*.

[5] The *guarding of chastity* does not preclude the lawful union of husband and wife.

[6] The basic principle of the religions of all the prophets is one, the Unity of God, and therefore all prophets themselves form a single community.

(it) down for him. 95 And it is binding on a town which We destroy that they shall not return.[1] 96 Even when Gog and Magog are made to overcome (the world) and they shall break forth from every elevated place.[2] 97 And the true promise shall draw nigh, then lo! the eyes of those who disbelieved shall be fixedly open: O woe to us! we were heedless as to this; nay, we were unjust. 98 Surely you and what you worship besides God are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come. 99 Had these been gods, they would not have come to it and all shall abide therein. 100 For them therein shall be groaning and therein they shall not hear. 101 Those for whom the good has already gone forth from Us shall be kept far off from it; 102 They will not hear its faintest sound and they shall abide in that which their souls long for. 103 The great fearful event shall not grieve them, and the angels shall meet them: This is your day which you were promised. 104 On the day when We will roll up heaven like the rolling up of the scroll for writings; as We originated the first creation, (so) We shall reproduce it; a promise (binding) on Us; surely We will bring it about.[3] 105 And truly We wrote in the Book after the

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[1] The verse reveals the great truth that those who are made to taste of death are not sent back into this world. Nisai and Ibn-i-Maja relate a saying of the Holy Prophet according to which Jabir, son of Abdulla, was informed by the Prophet that his father Abdulla, who was slain in a battle with the enemies of Islam, on being asked by the Almighty what he desired most, expressed a wish to go back into the world, and be slain again in the cause of truth, but received the reply that this could not be, for "the word has gone forth from Me that *they shall not return*," where the concluding words are evidently the concluding words of this verse, and therefore the verse, read along with this saying, settles conclusively that no one who is dead returns to life in this world.

[2] The previous verse contains a prohibition against the return to life of those who are dead, or the rise of nations that are once destroyed. This one points out that even Gog and Magog, notwithstanding their mighty predominance in the world, will follow the same law.

It also shows that a time will come when Gog and Magog shall prevail over the whole world. The breaking forth from every elevated place signifies the taking possession of every position of advantage and of eminence. For Gog and Magog, see 18 : 94.

[3] The rolling up of the heaven and the bringing about of a new creation while no doubt meaning the bringing about of the resurrection, also refers to the complete transformation which was to be brought about in Arabia by the Prophet's message, a transformation so great that, as it were, both earth and heaven were changed. Instead of the mutual strifes of one tribe with another, leading to endless confusion and disorder in the land, there was a single united nation marching forth with triumph and enlightenment, and instead of the childish fancies and impious super-

reminder that the land—My righteous servants shall
inherit it.[1] 106 In this is a message to a people who serve
(Us). 107 And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to
(all) the nations.[2] 108 Say: It is only revealed to me
that your God is one God; will you then submit? 109 But
if they turn back, say: I have given you warning in fair-
ness and I do not know whether what you are threatened
with is near or far: 110 He knows what is spoken openly
and He knows what you hide: 111 And I do not know if
this may be a trial for you and a provision till a time.
112 He said: O my Lord! judge Thou with truth; and
our Lord is the Beneficent God Whose help is sought
against what you ascribe (to Him).

CHAPTER 22

AL-HAJJ: THE PILGRIMAGE

(*Mecca*—10 *sections*; 78 *verses*)

THIS is the sixth chapter of the third Meccan group, and while the last chapter dealt generally with the ultimate triumph of truth, this deals particularly with the triumph of the truth proclaimed by the Holy Prophet at Mecca, from whence he was being expelled, and this city is plainly pronounced herein as being the future centre of the Muslims, to which pilgrims from all quarters

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stitions of fortune-tellers, diviners, and star-worshippers, and in place of idolatry which degraded human nature itself, there was an entire resignation to Divine will and holy communion with the real Source of all Holiness. See v. 30; also next verse.

[1] The Quran had repeatedly warned the unbelievers that Islam would be made triumphant in the land, and the righteous servants who were made to suffer persecution would one day be masters of the land. The words also contain a prophecy of the possession of the Holy Land by the Muslims, which was fulfilled in the caliphate of Umar. Compare Ps. 37: 29.

[2] While the words no doubt contain a reference to the merciful dealing with the Prophet's opponents, the real significance is that the Prophet's advent will prove a mercy not only to the Arabs by making them a foremost nation in the world, but to the whole of humanity. And, in fact, the teachings of the Quran have not only benefited its followers, but even those who still reject its message, for, notwithstanding their rejection of it, they have accepted many of its majestic principles. Islam has, moreover, proved a mercy to the nations on account of having brought back into the world all those teachings leading to the glory and greatness of man which had been quite lost to the world before its advent, and of having eradicated numerous superstitious beliefs, and doctrines degrading humanity.

of the world would resort. Here, too, the Muslims are permitted to fight in defence of the Sacred House, which was really a defence of the liberties of all religions. The chapter is called *The Pilgrimage* because the proclamation of pilgrimage originally made by Abraham was now repeated by the Holy Prophet and addressed to the whole world, being no longer confined to the borders of Arabia.

A promise is given to the righteous at the close of the last chapter that they shall inherit the land. This implies the doom of the present masters; consequently they are warned of the approach of judgment and of the terribleness of their doom in the opening verses of this chapter. The second section asserts in the most clear and emphatic words the certainty of Divine help to the Holy Prophet, the emphasis being no doubt due to the utter helplessness of the Prophet, against whom secret plans had been formed, and who was about to flee from his enemies. The next section asserts the triumph of the believers, who were now fleeing by twos and threes to escape persecution by their cruel oppressors. Their triumph, however, involved the conquest of Mecca, for without that spiritual centre their triumph could not be complete, hence the fourth section speaks of the Sacred House and the pilgrimage to it. The connected subject of sacrifices is dealt with next, and the sacrifices which the Muslims themselves were now required to make, viz. the laying down of their lives in the cause of truth, are spoken of in the sixth section, which introduces the subject of fighting. The opposition to the Holy Prophet is mentioned in the seventh, and the eighth clearly states that the faithful shall be established in the land when they have made great sacrifices. God's dealing, however, with even the opponents of the truth is merciful, and therefore the punishment is withheld for a while. This we are told in the ninth section, which also shows that mere differences of belief are not punished in this world. The tenth, which is the last section, sums up the whole by showing that polytheism shall ultimately be uprooted.

The chapter seems to have been revealed at a later date than the preceding chapters of this group. The verses permitting the fighting in self-defence were evidently revealed towards the close of the Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—The Judgment

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O people! guard against (the punishment of) your Lord; for the shaking of the hour is a grievous thing.[1]

[1] In the Holy Quran the word *as-sá'at* or *the hour* does not necessarily imply the day of judgment. It often implies the time of judgment in this life, the time when the threatened doom overtakes a people, and this seems to be the significance here, for the very next verse depicts that terror in such words as are only applicable to this life—there being neither pregnant women nor those giving suck on the judgment day. Some consider that a severe shaking of the earth is meant as a sign of the approach

2 On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving
suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every
pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and thou
shalt see men intoxicated, and they shall not be intoxicated,
but the chastisement of God will be severe. 3 And among
men there is he who disputes about God without know-
ledge and follows every rebellious devil; 4 Against him
it is written down that whoever takes him for a friend,
he shall lead him astray and conduct him to the chastise-
ment of the burning fire. 5 O people! if you are in doubt
about the resurrection,[1] then surely We created you from
dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then
from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete,
that We may make clear to you; and We cause what We
please to stay in the wombs till an appointed time, then
We bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain
your maturity; and of you is he who is caused to die, and
of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life,
so that after having knowledge he does not know anything;
and thou seest the earth sterile land, but when We send
down water on it, it stirs and swells and brings forth of
every kind a beautiful herbage. 6 This is because God
is the Truth and because He gives life to the dead and
because He has power over all things, 7 And because the
hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and because
God shall raise up those who are in the graves. 8 And
among men there is he who disputes about God without
knowledge and without guidance and without an illu-
minating book, 9 Turning away haughtily that he may
lead (others) astray from the way of God; for him is
disgrace in this world, and on the day of resurrection We
will make him taste the punishment of burning. 10 This
is due to what thy two hands have sent before, and because
God is not in the least unjust to the servants.

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of the great judgment, but even in that case it might imply any terrible calamity, such as a great war. The word *zalzala*, rendered here as *shaking*, means *a violent agitation, whether an earthquake or any other disaster, or a calamity*.

[1] The word *ba's* (*resurrection*) is used in three senses in the Holy Quran: viz. (1) the raising of the dead to life, according to their good or evil deeds on the judgment day, which is the day of the great manifestation of all spiritual realities; (2) the raising of the spiritually dead to life by the prophets; and (3) the raising up of prophets by God for the guidance of mankind. The word as used here may include all three cases.

SECTION 2.—Certainty of Divine Help

11 And among men is he who serves God (standing) on
the verge, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied there-
with, but if a trial afflicts him he turns back headlong; he
loses this world as well as the hereafter; that is a manifest
loss. 12 He calls besides God upon that which does not
harm him and that which does not profit him; that is the
far-off straying. 13 He calls upon him whose harm is
nearer than his profit; certainly evil is the guardian and
evil the associate. 14 God will cause those who believe
and do good deeds to enter gardens in which rivers flow;
surely God does what He pleases. 15 Whoever thinks
that God will not help him in this life and the hereafter,
let him raise (himself) by some means to the heaven, then
let him cut (it) off, and let him see if his struggle will
take away that at which he is enraged.[1] 16 And thus
have We revealed it, being clear arguments, and because
God guides whom He intends. 17 Those who believe
and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians
and the Magians and those who set up gods (with God)—
God will decide between them on the day of resurrection;
for God is a witness over all things. 18 Dost thou not
see that God is He Whom obeys whoever is in the heavens
and whoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and
the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals
and many of the people; and many there are against
whom chastisement has become necessary; and whom-
soever God abases, there is none who can make him honour-
able; surely God does what He pleases. 19 These are
two adversaries who dispute about their Lord; so for
those who disbelieve are cut out garments of fire; boiling
water shall be poured over their heads. 20 With it shall
be melted what is in their bellies and (their) skins as well.
21 And for them are whips of iron. 22 Whenever they
will desire to go forth from it, from grief, they shall be
turned back into it, and taste the chastisement of burning.

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[1] This passage is misconstrued on account of a misconception in connection with the personal pronoun *hu* in *yansurahú*, which refers really to the Holy Prophet. The second difficulty is in connection with the object of *yaqta'*, i.e. *cut* (it) *off*, which is understood as being really the Divine assistance, which the opponents are told must come to the Holy Prophet, however hard their struggle against that Divine assistance, and this is clearly indicated by the concluding words of the verse.

SECTION 3.—**Triumph of Believers**

23 God will make those who believe and do good deeds enter gardens in which rivers flow; they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and (with) pearls, and their garments therein shall be of silk. 24 And they are guided to goodly words and they are guided into the path of the Praised One. 25 Those who disbelieve and hinder (men) from God's way and from the Sacred Mosque which We have made equally for all men, (for) the dweller therein and (for) the visitor, and whoever shall incline therein to wrong unjustly, We will make him taste a painful chastisement.

SECTION 4.—**The Sacred House**

26 And when We assigned to Abraham the place of the House, saying: Do not set up aught with Me, and purify My House for those who make the circuit and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves. 27 And proclaim among men the pilgrimage: they will come to thee on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path,[1] 28 That they may witness advantages for them and mention the name of God during stated days over what He has given them of the cattle quadrupeds, then eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy.[2] 29 Then let them accomplish their needful acts of shaving and cleansing, and let them fulfil their vows and let them go round the Ancient House.[3] 30 That (shall be so); and whoever respects the sacred ordinances of God it is better for him with his Lord; and the cattle are made lawful for you, except that which is recited to you; therefore avoid the uncleanness of the idols and avoid false words, 31 Being upright for God, not associating aught with Him; and whoever associates (others) with God, it is as though he had fallen from on high, then the birds snatch

[1] The words are addressed to the Holy Prophet, and contain a mighty prophecy that Mecca will become the centre to which men shall come for pilgrimage. The grandeur of this prophecy becomes the greater when it is borne in mind that it was announced just at the time when the Holy Prophet's cause seemed to be almost a failure.

[2] The subject of sacrifices is one that is specially related to the pilgrimage, because every pilgrim must sacrifice an animal.

[3] The mention of the Ka'ba as the Ancient House, here and in v. 33, shows that it is so old that it came to be known throughout Arabia by that name, thus pointing to its very remote antiquity.

him away or the wind carries him off to a far-distant place.
32 That (shall be so); and whoever respects the signs
of God, this surely is (the outcome) of the piety of hearts.
33 You have advantages in them till a fixed time, then
their place of sacrifice is the Ancient House.

SECTION 5.—Sacrifices

34 And to every nation We appointed acts of devotion
that they may mention the name of God on what He has
given them of the cattle quadrupeds; so your God is One
God, therefore to Him should you submit, and give good
news to the humble,[1] 35 (To) those whose hearts tremble
when God is mentioned, and those who are patient under
that which afflicts them, and those who keep up prayer,
and spend out of what We have given them. 36 And
(as for) the camels, We have made them of the signs of
the religion of God for you; for you therein is much good;
therefore mention the name of God on them as they stand
in a row, then when they fall down eat of them and feed
the poor man who is contented and the beggar;[2] thus
have We made them subservient to you, that you may
be grateful. 37 There does not reach God their flesh
nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable righteousness on
your part;[3] thus has He made them subservient to you,

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[1] The principle of sacrifice is one which is accepted in one form or another by all nations of the world. Like all other religious principles which are universally recognized, the principle of sacrifice finds a deeper meaning in Islam. The outward act is still there as of old, but it no more conveys the meaning attached to it in some ancient religions, viz. that of appeasing an offended Deity, or that of serving as an atonement for sins, but signifies the sacrifice of the sacrificer himself, and becomes thus an outward symbol of his readiness to lay down his life if required and to sacrifice all his interests and desires in the cause of truth. Hence it is that words introducing the subject of sacrifice are immediately followed by an injunction to submit oneself entirely to God, Who is the *one God*, i.e. the only Being Who deserves to be made the true object of one's love and the true goal of one's life. See further what follows.

[2] The flesh of the animals sacrificed is not to be wasted, but it should serve as food for the poor and the needy. The burying of the flesh of the numerous sacrifices at Mecca, on the occasion of the pilgrimage, is not in accordance with any injunction of the Holy Quran or any saying of the Holy Prophet. It can be turned to good use by drying.

[3] This verse settles conclusively that it is not the outward act of sacrifice which is acceptable, but the deep meaning underlying it. Those who consider Islam to be a religion of ceremonial should note these plain words. It should also be borne in mind that the idea of atonement is

that you may magnify God because He has guided you aright; and give good news to those who do good (to others). 38 God will repel from those who believe; surely God does not love any one who is unfaithful, ungrateful.

SECTION 6.—Permission to fight

39 Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and God is well able to assist them;[1] 40 Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is God. And had there not been God's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered; and God will help him who helps Him; for God is Strong, Mighty:[2] 41 Those who, should We establish them in the land, will keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and enjoin good and forbid evil; and God's is the end of affairs. 42 And if they reject thee, already before them did the people of Noah and Ad and Samood reject (prophets), 43 And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot, 44 As well as those of Midian, and Moses (too) was rejected, but I gave respite to the unbelievers, then did I overtake them, so how (severe) was My disapproval.

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quite foreign to the Islamic sacrifices. It is the righteous whom Islam requires to sacrifice, and this is hinted at in the words, *to Him is acceptable righteousness on your part.*

[1] According to authentic reports, this is the earliest permission given to the Muslims to fight. There is nothing to show that this verse was not revealed at Mecca. It was owing to this revelation that in the well-known oath of allegiance taken at Aqaba the Holy Prophet required a promise from the Medina deputation that they would defend him against his enemies even as they would defend their own children. The words in which the permission is granted show clearly that war was first made on the Muslims by their opponents; and secondly, that the Muslims had already suffered great oppression at the hands of their persecutors.

[2] Those who call Islam a religion of fanaticism may be reminded here that the religious freedom which was established by Islam in a country like Arabia thirteen hundred years ago has not yet been surpassed by the most civilized and tolerant of nations, while many of the civilized Christian nations are still as far from upholding this noble principle as ever they were. It deserves to be noted that the lives of Muslims are to be sacrificed not only to stop their own persecution by their opponents and to save their own mosques, but to save churches, synagogues, and cloisters as well—in fact, to establish perfect religious freedom.

45 And how many a town did We destroy while it was
unjust, so it was fallen down upon its roofs, and (how
many a) deserted well and palace raised high. 46 Have
they not travelled in the land so that they should have
hearts with which to understand, or ears with which to
hear? For it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind
are the hearts which are in the breasts. 47 And they
ask thee to hasten on the chastisement, and God will by
no means fail in His promise, and a day with thy Lord is
as a thousand years of what you number. 48 And how
many a town to which I gave respite while it was unjust,
then I overtook it, and to Me is the return.

SECTION 7.—**Opposition to the Prophet**

49 Say: O people! I am only a plain warner to you.
50 Those who believe and do good shall have forgiveness
and an honourable sustenance. 51 And those who strive
to oppose Our communications shall be the inmates of
the flaming fire. 52 And We did not send before thee
any apostle or prophet, but when he desired, the devil
made a suggestion respecting his desire; but God annuls
that which the devil casts, then does God establish His
communications, and God is Knowing, Wise,[1] 53 So
that He may make what the devil casts a trial for those
in whose hearts is disease and those whose hearts are
hard; and the unjust are in a great opposition,[2] 54 And
that those who have been given the knowledge may know
that it is the truth from thy Lord, so they may believe

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[1] The story which is suggested as explaining this verse, viz. the devil's putting certain words into the Prophet's mouth while he was reciting chapter 53, is absurd and baseless, for this verse was revealed at least eight years after chapter 53. Moreover, the words of the Quran do not, and cannot, mean that when a prophet recites a revelation, the devil introduces his own words into his recitation. *Tamanná*, according to all lexicologists, signifies *he desired.* Now, what every prophet desires is the establishing in the world of the Unity of the Divine Being and of the truth that is revealed to him, and it is with this desire of every prophet that the devil interferes, instigating men, *making suggestions to them*, as stated here, to oppose the prophet and the spread of truth. That this is the true meaning is also shown by the context, which deals with the establishing of the truth and the desire of the opponents of truth to annihilate it. See the previous verse, which condemns those who fight and contest with the Prophet to render him unable to establish the truth in the world.

[2] The devil's strivings against the Prophet become a trial for the weak, who, unable to endure the severe persecutions of their enemies, go back to unbelief.

in it and their hearts may be lowly before it; and God
is truly the Guide, of those who believe, into a right path.
55 And those who disbelieve shall not cease to be in doubt
concerning it until the hour overtakes them suddenly, or
there comes on them the chastisement of a destructive
day. 56 The kingdom on that day shall be God's; He
will judge between them; so those who believe and do
good will be in gardens of bliss. 57 And those who dis-
believe in and reject Our communications—these it is
who shall have a disgraceful chastisement.

SECTION 8.—Faithful shall be established

58 And those who fly in God's way and are then slain
or die—God will certainly grant them a goodly sustenance,
and God is the best Giver of sustenance. 59 He will
cause them to enter a place of entrance which they shall be
well pleased with; and God is Knowing, Forbearing.
60 That (shall be so); and he who follows up (evil) with
the like of that with which he has been afflicted and he
has been oppressed, God will certainly aid him; yet
God is Pardoning, Forgiving.[1] 61 That is because God
causes the night to enter into the day and causes the day
to enter into the night, and because God is Hearing, Seeing.[2]
62 That is because God is the Truth, and that what they
call upon besides Him—that is the falsehood, and because
God is the High, the Great. 63 Dost thou not see that
God sends down water from the cloud so the earth becomes
green? Surely God is Benignant, Aware. 64 His is
whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the
earth; and surely God is the Self-sufficient, the Praised.

SECTION 9.—God's dealing is merciful

65 Dost thou not see that God has made subservient to
you whatsoever is in the earth and the ships running in the
sea by His command? And He withholds the rain from

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[1] This verse permits the Muslims, who were long persecuted and oppressed, to punish their persecutors, but at the same time recommends pardon and forgiveness by referring to those two attributes of the Divine Being, in the concluding words of the verse.

[2] Apparently the succession of the day and the night refers here to the turn of fortune hinted at in the previous verse, because an oppressed community could not punish its persecutors unless it gained the mastery over them.

falling on the earth except with His permission; truly
God is Compassionate, Merciful to men. 66 And He it is
Who has brought you to life, then He will cause you to
die, then bring you to life (again); man is indeed un-
grateful. 67 To every nation We appointed acts of
devotion which they observe, therefore they should not
dispute with thee about the matter, and call to thy Lord;
certainly thou art on a right way. 68 And if they contend
with thee, say: God best knows what you do. 69 God
will judge between you on the day of resurrection respect-
ing that in which you differ. 70 Dost thou not know that
God knows what is in the heaven and the earth? Surely
this is in a book; this is easy to God. 71 And they serve
besides God that for which He has not sent any authority,
and that of which they have no knowledge; and for the
unjust there shall be no helper. 72 And when Our clear
communications are recited to them, thou wilt find denial
on the faces of those who disbelieve; they almost spring
upon those who recite to them Our communications.
Say: Shall I inform you of what is worse than this?
The fire. God has promised it to those who disbelieve;
and how evil the resort!

SECTION 10.—**Polytheism shall be uprooted**

73 O people! a parable is set forth, therefore listen to
it. Those whom you call upon besides God cannot create
a fly, though they should all gather for it, and should
the fly carry off aught from them, they could not take it
back from it; weak are the invoker and the invoked.[1]
74 They have not estimated God with the estimation
that is due to Him; surely God is Strong, Mighty. 75 God
chooses messengers from among the angels and from among
men; God is Hearing, Seeing. 76 He knows what is
before them and what is behind them, and to God are all
affairs turned back. 77 O you who believe! bow down
and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord, and do
good that you may prosper. 78 And strive hard in (the

[1] The verse, while truly describing the inability of false gods to create the lowest form of life or to exercise the least control over creation, contains a clear prophecy that the false deities shall be swept off from the Sacred House, and that both the worshippers and the worshipped shall become helpless.

way of) God, (such) a striving as is due to Him ; He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion ; the faith of your father Abraham ; He named you Muslims before and in this ; that the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you and you may be bearers of witness to the people ; therefore keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and hold fast by God ; He is your Guardian ; how excellent the Guardian and how excellent the Helper !

PART XVIII

CHAPTER 23

AL-MU'MINŨN : THE BELIEVERS

(*Mecca—6 sections ; 118 verses*)

THIS chapter, which brings the third group of the Meccan chapters to a close, is known under the name of *The Believers* because it deals with the success of the believers.

As the final word of kind advice and as a firm expression of the success of the believers, the chapter no doubt forms an appropriate sequel to a group of chapters dealing with the great and triumphant future of Islam. It seems to continue, in fact, the subject-matter of the last chapter, and therefore asserts the success of the believers in clear and forcible words in the first section, which is followed by two others referring to similar success in the case of former prophets. The fourth section tells us that the history of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is, in fact, a repetition of the history of various prophets. The last great Divine revelation was a final blow at polytheism, which really stands condemned out of the mouths of its own votaries, as the fifth section shows. The sixth naturally brings the subject to a close by showing how the wicked will regret what they indulged in so freely.

In point of time this chapter is most probably a later revelation than all the previous chapters of this group except the last.

SECTION 1.—Success of the Faithful

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Successful indeed are the believers, 2 Who are
humble in their prayers, 3 And who keep aloof from what
is vain, 4 And who act aiming at purification,[1] 5 And
who guard their private parts, 6 Except before their

[1] The word ***zakât*** carries here the same significance as in 19 : 13, i.e **purity.**

mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they
are not blameable,[1] 7 But whoever seeks to go beyond
that, these are they that exceed the limits; 8 And those
who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, 9 And
those who keep a guard on their prayers; 10 These are
they who are the heirs, 11 Who shall inherit the Paradise;
they shall abide therein. 12 And certainly We have
created man of an extract of clay;[2] 13 Then We make
him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place. 14 Then
We make the life-germ a clot, then We make the clot a
lump of flesh, and We make (in) the lump of flesh bones,
and We clothe the bones with flesh, then We cause it to
grow into another creation, so blessed be God, the best
of the creators.[3] 15 Then after that you will surely die.
16 Then on the day of resurrection you shall be raised.
17 And certainly We made above you seven ways;[4]
and never are We heedless of creation. 18 And We send
down water from the cloud according to a measure, then
We cause it to settle in the earth, and surely We are able
to carry it away. 19 Then We cause to grow thereby
gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have
in them many fruits and from them do you eat; 20 And

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[1] A Muslim, man or woman, is not allowed to expose, in the presence of others, any part of the body which it is not decent to expose, but a certain degree of freedom is allowed to women in the presence of their husbands and female servants, and to men in the presence of their wives and male servants. According to the Islamic ideas of decency, the exposure of such parts of the body as European ladies are generally in the habit of exposing in ballrooms and theatres is disallowed. It should be noted that this chapter is a Meccan revelation, and the conditions under which slave-girls could be taken as wives were given later at Medina, so that if the reference here is to sexual relations, the permission regarding those whom their right hands possess must be read subject to the conditions of 4 : 25.

[2] The creation of man is here traced back to earth, as being an extract or essence of the earth, for the life-germ in sperma is an extract of the food which is drawn from earth in whatever form it may be. It should be noted that while the first ten verses speak of the spiritual growth of man, his physical growth is here spoken of, and thus a comparison may be established between the physical and the spiritual growth.

[3] The report that Abdulla bin Sad, the Prophet's scribe, uttered the concluding words before the Holy Prophet dictated them to him is not authentic.

[4] Instead of the *seven heavens*, here we have the *seven ways*, which are no doubt the orbits of the seven members of the solar systems, excluding the earth. This shows that the word heaven is used in a variety of ways in the Holy Quran. It means what is overhead; it means the clouds; it means the upper regions; it means the planets of the solar system; it means their orbits; it means the whole starry creation as seen by the eye.

a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil
and a condiment for those who eat. 21 And surely there
is a lesson for you in the cattle; We make you to drink
of what is in their bellies, and you have in them many
advantages and of them you eat. 22 And on them and
on the ships you are borne.

SECTION 2.—Noah's Success

23 And We sent Noah to his people; so he said: O
my people! serve God; you have no god other than Him:
will you not guard (against evil)? 24 And the chiefs of
those who disbelieved from among his people said: He is
nothing but a mortal like yourselves who desires that he
may have superiority over you, and if God had pleased,
He could have sent down angels. We have not heard of
this among our fathers of yore: 25 He is only a madman,
so bear with him for a time. 26 He said: O my Lord!
help me against their calling me a liar. 27 So We revealed
to him, saying: Make the ark before Our eyes and (accord-
ing to) Our revelation; and when Our command is given
and the valley overflows, take into it two of every (needful)
thing, a pair, and thy family, except those among them
against whom the word has gone forth, and do not speak
to Me in respect of those who are unjust; they shall be
drowned. 28 And when thou art firmly seated, thou and
those with thee, in the ark, say: All praise is due to God
Who delivered us from the unjust people: 29 And say:
O my Lord! cause me to alight a blessed alighting, and
Thou art the best to cause to alight. 30 Surely there
are signs in this, and We are ever trying (men). 31 Then
We raised up after them another generation. 32 So We
sent among them an apostle from among them, saying:
Serve God, you have no god other than Him; will you
not then guard (against evil)?

SECTION 3.—Prophets after Noah

33 And the chiefs of his people who disbelieved and
called the meeting of the hereafter a lie and whom We
had given plenty to enjoy in this world's life, said: This
is nothing but a mortal like yourselves, eating of what you
eat from and drinking of what you drink: 34 And if you

obey a mortal like yourselves, then surely you will be
losers: 35 What! does he threaten you that, when you
are dead and become dust and bones, you shall then be
brought forth? 36 Far, far is that which you are
threatened with: 37 There is naught but our life in this
world; we die and we live and we shall not be raised
again: 38 He is naught but a man who has forged a
lie against God, and we are not going to believe in him.
39 He said: O my Lord! help me against their calling
me a liar. 40 He said: In a little while they will surely
become repentant. 41 And the punishment overtook
them in justice, and We made them as rubbish; so away
with the unjust people. 42 Then We raised after them
other generations. 43 No people can hasten on their
doom nor can they postpone (it). 44 Then We sent Our
apostles one after another; whenever there came to a
people their apostle, they called him a liar, and We made
some of them follow others and We made them stories,
so away with a people who do not believe! 45 Then We
sent Moses and his brother Aaron, with Our communications
and a clear authority 46 To Pharaoh and his chiefs, but
they behaved haughtily and they were an insolent people.
47 And they said: What! shall we believe in two mortals
like ourselves while their people serve us? 48 So they
rejected them and became of those who were destroyed.
49 And We gave Moses the Book that they may follow
a right direction. 50 And We made the son of Mary
and his mother a sign, and We gave them a shelter on a
lofty ground having meadows and springs.[1]

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[1] As shown in the footnote on 4:157, Jesus did not die on the cross. This verse tells us that, being delivered from the hands of his enemies, he was given shelter at some other place, and the description of that place as indicated in this verse, along with the fact that in the Khan Yar at Srinagar is a tomb which every available evidence shows to be the tomb of Jesus himself, leads to the conclusion that Cashmere is the land referred to in this verse. As regards the tomb, the following evidence shows that the sacred body of no less a personage than Jesus Christ rests there. (*a*) Oral testimony, based on traditions, of the people of Cashmere tells us that the tomb belongs to one who bore the name of Yus Asaf, who was known as a *nabi* (i.e. a *prophet*), and who came to Cashmere from the west about 2,000 years ago. (*b*) The *Tarikh-i-Azami*, an historical work written some two hundred years ago, says, referring to this tomb, on p. 82: "The tomb is generally known as that of a prophet. He was a prince, who came to Cashmere from a foreign land. . . . His name was Yus Asaf." (*c*) The *Ikmal-ud-Din*, an Arabic work which is a thousand years old, also mentions Yus Asaf as having travelled in *some lands.*

SECTION 4.—**Greatness is attained by Morals, not Wealth**

51 O apostles! eat of the good things and do good;
I know what you do. 52 And this your community is
one community and I am your Lord, therefore be careful
(of your duty) to Me. 53 But they have become divided
among themselves into parties, each party rejoicing in that
which is with them. 54 Therefore leave them in their
overwhelming ignorance till a time. 55 Do they think
that by what We aid them with of wealth and children,
56 We are hastening to them of good things? Nay,
they do not perceive. 57 They who from fear of their
Lord are cautious, 58 And those who believe in the com-
munications of their Lord, 59 And those who do not
associate (aught) with their Lord, 60 And those who
give what they give (in alms) while their hearts are full
of fear that to their Lord they must return, 61 These
hasten to good things and they are foremost in (attaining)
them. 62 And We do not lay on any soul a burden except
to the extent of its ability, and with Us is a book which
speaks the truth, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.
63 Nay, their hearts are in overwhelming ignorance with
respect to it and they have besides this other deeds which
they do. 64 Until when We overtake those who lead
easy lives among them with chastisement, lo! they cry
for succour. 65 Cry not for succour this day; you shall
not be given help from Us. 66 My communications were
indeed recited to you, but you used to turn back on your
heels, 67 Haughtily discoursing about it, you withdrew
yourselves to a distance. 68 Is it then that they do not
ponder over what is said, or is it that there has come to

(*d*) Joseph Jacobs states, on the authority of a very old version of the story of Yus Asaf, that he (Joasaph) at last reached Cashmere, and there died ("Barlaam and Josaphet," p. cv). This evidence shows that the tomb in Khan Yar is the tomb of *Yus Asaf*. But who is this *Yus Asaf*? That he is called a *nabi* (*prophet*) both in oral tradition and in history settles the time in which he lived, for no prophet is recognized by the Muslims to have appeared after their Holy Prophet. Again, there is a striking resemblance between the names Yús and Yasū', the latter being the Arabic form of Jesus. There is a striking resemblance in the teachings of Yus Asaf and Jesus; for instance the parable of the seed-sower (Matt. 13:3, etc.) occurs also in "Barlaam and Josaphet," and Yus Asaf calls his teaching *Bushra*, i.e. Gospel. All these circumstances lead to the conclusion that Jesus Christ went to Cashmere after the event of the crucifixion, and that he preached, lived, and died there.

them that which did not come to their fathers of old?
69 Or is it that they have not recognized their Apostle,
so they deny him? 70 Or do they say: There is madness
in him? Nay! he has brought them the truth, and
most of them are averse to the truth. 71 And should
the truth follow their low desires, the heavens and the
earth and all those who are therein would have perished.
Nay! We have brought to them their reminder, but
from their reminder they turn aside. 72 Or is it that
thou askest them a recompense? But the recompense of
thy Lord is best, and He is the best of those who provide
sustenance. 73 And surely thou invitest them to a right
way. 74 And those who do not believe in the hereafter
are certainly deviating from the way. 75 And if We
show mercy to them and remove the distress they have,
they would persist in their inordinacy, blindly wandering
on. 76 And already We overtook them with chastise-
ment, but they were not submissive to their Lord, nor
do they humble themselves. 77 Until when We open
upon them a door of severe chastisement, lo! they are
in despair at it.

SECTION 5.—**Polytheism is self-condemned**

78 And He it is Who made for you the ears and the eyes
and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks. 79 And
He it is Who multiplied you in the earth, and to Him
you shall be gathered. 80 And He it is Who gives life
and causes death, and (in) His (control) is the alternation
of the night and the day; do you not understand?
81 Nay, they say the like of what the ancients said:
82 They say: What! when we are dead and become
dust and bones, shall we then be raised? 83 We are
promised this, and (so were) our fathers aforetime; this
is naught but stories of those of old. 84 Say: Whose is
the earth and whoever is therein, if you know? 85 They
will say: God's. Say: Will you not then mind? 86 Say:
Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the
mighty throne? 87 They will say: (This is) God's.
Say: Will you not then guard (against evil)? 88 Say:
Who is it in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things and
Who gives succour, and against Him succour is not given,

if you do but know? 89 They will say: (This is) God's.
Say: From whence are you then deceived? 90 Nay!
We have brought to them the truth, and surely they are
liars. 91 Never did God take to Himself a son, and never
was there with Him any (other) god—in that case would
each god have taken away what he created, and some of
them would have overpowered others; glory be to God
above what they describe! 92 The Knower of the unseen
and the seen, so may He be exalted above what they
associate (with Him).

SECTION 6.—The Wicked regret

93 Say: O my Lord! if Thou shouldst make me see
what they are threatened with, 94 My Lord! then place
me not with the unjust. 95 And We are well able to
make thee see what We threaten them with. 96 Repel
evil by what is best;[1] We know best what they describe.
97 And say: O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from
the evil suggestions of the devils:[2] 98 And I seek refuge
in Thee, O my Lord! from their presence. 99 Until
when death overtakes one of them, he says: Send me
back, my Lord, send me back.[3] 100 Haply I may do
good in what I have left. By no means! it is a (mere)
word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until
the day (when) they are raised.[4] 101 So when the trumpet

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[1] *Evil* is a thing that must be *repelled*; but in repelling it the rule to be observed is that it must be repelled by *what is best*. If you can repel an evil by doing good for it, it is what is recommended; but if punishment is necessary, and the meekest follower of Christ must admit the necessity of the punishment of evil, that would be the better course.

[2] The evil suggestions of the devils were really the evil suggestions of the wicked ones; see v. 99. But even if the words are taken in a general sense there can be no objection, for *to seek refuge in the Lord* is the height of goodness. Nowhere has a man a better refuge than in the Source of all strength, and no mortal can aspire to a higher honour than having his refuge in the Lord. The command to the Prophet to say this is really an image of the aspiration of his soul, the inmost desire which furnished the guiding rule of his life. His soul rested in that highest degree of security from all evil suggestions which is termed the *refuge in the Lord*.

[3] In Arabic the plural is sometimes used to denote a repetition of the singular verb, and thus *irji'úni* is here regarded as equivalent to *irji'ni* repeated twice, and I have thus translated it.

[4] That the dead do not return to life is a principle which is reaffirmed here; see 21:95. According to the Holy Quran there are three states of a man's life, viz. his life in this world, his life in *barzakh*, and the great manifestation of all spiritual realities that will take place on the day of resurrection; the state of *barzakh* being the intermediate state in which the

is blown, there shall be no ties of relationship between
them on that day, nor shall they ask of each other.
102 Then as for him whose good deeds are preponderant,
these are the successful. 103 And as for him whose
good deeds are light, these are they who shall have lost
their souls, abiding in hell. 104 The fire shall scorch
their faces, and they therein shall be in severe affliction.
105 Were not My communications recited to you? But
you used to reject them. 106 They shall say: O our
Lord! our adversity overcame us and we were an erring
people: 107 O our Lord! take us out of it; then if we
return (to evil), we shall be unjust. 108 He shall say:
Go away into it and speak not to Me: 109 There was a
party of My servants who said: O our Lord! we believe,
so do Thou forgive us and have mercy on us, and Thou art
the best of the merciful ones; 110 But you took them
for a mockery until they made you forget My remembrance
and you used to laugh at them: 111 I have rewarded
them this day because they were patient, that they are
the achievers. 112 He will say: How many years did
you tarry in the earth? 113 They will say: We tarried
a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep account.
114 He will say: You did tarry but a little—had you
but known (it). 115 What! do you think that We have
created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to
Us. 116 So exalted be God, the True King; no god is
there but He, the Lord of the honourable throne. 117 And
whoever invokes with God another god—he has no proof of
this—his reckoning is only with his Lord; the unbelievers
shall not prosper. 118 And say: O my Lord! forgive
and have mercy, and Thou art the best of the merciful
ones.

CHAPTER 24

AN-NŪR: THE LIGHT

(Medina—9 sections; 64 verses)

"LIGHT," the title of this chapter, is taken from the statement made in section 5, where Islam is shown to be the most perfect manifestation of Divine light, and is compared to a most refined and re-

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soul lives after death till the greater resurrection. Here it is stated in plain words that no one who has passed into the state of *barzakh* through death's door is allowed to go back into the previous state.

splendently brilliant light which shall shine in the East as well as in the West.

The continuity of the Meccan revelation, which begins with the 10th chapter, may apparently seem to have been abruptly broken by the introduction of a Medina revelation, but the reader who has followed the chain of reasoning showing the continuity of the subject-matter in the present arrangement of chapters cannot fail to observe the deep relation that exists between the last group of the Meccan chapters and this Medina revelation. As already pointed out in the head-note to the last chapter, the group of the Meccan chapters beginning with the 17th and ending with the 23rd chapter deals with the great and triumphant future of Islam, and hence it is fittingly followed by a chapter which promises in the clearest words the establishment of the kingdom of Islam. The principal point dealt with in this chapter is not really the subject of adultery and its preventives, but the fact that the light of Islam is the purest ray of Divine light, that it shall never die out, that its light shall not be limited either to the East or to the West, but shall lighten both (v. 35), and that the kingdom of Islam shall be permanently established (v. 55). But as the establishment of a kingdom brings ease and luxury in its train, leading to such social evils as adultery and slander, the undermining evils of civilized society, the latter subject is also dealt with here, along with the preventive measures calculated to check these evils.

The chapter thus begins with a condemnation of adultery. The second section deals with the gravity of the sin of those who talked slander about a most innocent woman, Ayesha, the Holy Prophet's wife. This is followed by another pardoning Ayesha's slanderers and condemning the slanderers of women in general. The fourth section deals with measures which would serve as a check upon adulterous intercourse. Then follow three sections dealing with the kindling of Divine light in Muslim hearts and the manifestation of Divine power in establishing the kingdom of Islam. The eighth section again refers to the subject-matter of the opening sections by enjoining respect for each other's privacy, which is calculated to put restraint upon the tongue of slander, and the last section enjoins that private matters should not take precedence of matters of state.

The whole of this chapter is universally held to be a Medina revelation, and the major portion of it belongs to the fifth year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Law relating to Adultery

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 (This is) a chapter which We have revealed and made obligatory and in which We have revealed clear communications that you may be mindful. 2 The adultress and the adulterer, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to God, if you believe in God and the last day,

and let a party of believers witness their chastisement.[1]
3 The adulterer shall not marry any but an adultress or
idolatress, and the adultress, none shall marry her but
an adulterer or an idolater; and it is forbidden to the
believers.[2] 4 And those who accuse free women, then
do not bring four witnesses, flog them, (giving) eighty
stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever;
and these it is that are the transgressors,[3] 5 Except those
who repent after this and act aright, for God is Forgiving,
Merciful. 6 And those who accuse their wives and have
no witnesses except themselves, the evidence of one of
these (should be taken) four times, bearing God to witness
that he is of the truthful ones. 7 And the fifth (time)
that the curse of God be on him if he is one of the liars.[4]
8 And it shall avert the chastisement from her if she
testify four times, bearing God to witness that he is one
of the liars; 9 And the fifth (time) that the wrath of

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[1] Chastity, as a virtue, is not given the first place in modern civilized society. Materialism has taken such a strong hold of the civilized mind that even chastity, the most precious jewel in a woman's crown of virtue, can be compensated for by a few pounds. The breach of the greatest trust which can be imposed in a man or a woman, the breach which ruins families, destroys household peace, and deprives innocent children of their loving mothers, is not looked upon even as seriously as the breach of trust of a few pounds. Hence the Islamic law seems to be too severe to an easy-going Westerner. But it should be borne in mind that *stoning to death* is not anywhere in the Holy Quran stated to be the punishment of adultery. On the other hand, 4 : 25, which tells us that the punishment of adultery can be halved, is conclusive that death is not the punishment of adultery. Some traditions no doubt speak of one or two occasions on which a person was stoned to death, but even if these are accepted as reliable, there is nothing to show that such a punishment was given after the revelation of this verse. As regards the stripes, it should be noted that the *jaldah* is not the same as stripe. It only means beating with a stick or any other thing so that the effect of it may be felt on the *jald*, i.e. the skin. It appears from the reports that in the earlier days, the punishment was meted out by a stick and sometimes even by the hand, the person punished not being tied, nor bared of his ordinary clothes. The punishment seems to have carried with it more of disgrace than torture.

[2] This verse places one guilty of adultery under a kind of interdict. His or her company is to be shunned, so much so that whores and whoremongers are not allowed to have matrimonial relations in good Muslim society. This, more than anything else, would check the offence of fornication.

[3] This is an effectual restraint against slander and gossip, which so often bring disaster to innocent women.

[4] The ordinance relates to the case of husbands who accuse their wives of adultery and have no evidence. In such a case a divorce is effected, the husband not being punishable for the accusation, though he cannot produce witnesses, and the wife not being punishable for adultery if she denies the charge in the manner stated. Compare Num. 5 : 11–31.

God be on her if he is one of the truthful. 10 And were it not for God's grace upon you and His mercy—and that God is Oft-returning (to mercy), Wise.

SECTION 2.—Ayesha's Slanderers

11 They who concocted the lie are a party from among you.[1] Do not regard it an evil to you, nay, it is good for you. Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin; and he who took upon himself the main part thereof shall have a grievous chastisement.[2] 12 Why did not the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, think well of their own people, and say: This is an evident falsehood?[3] 13 Why did they not bring four witnesses of it? But as they have not brought witnesses they are liars before God. 14 And were it not for God's grace upon you and His mercy in this world and the hereafter, a grievous chastisement would have touched you on account of the discourse which you entered into. 15 When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, and you deemed it an easy matter while with God it was grievous. 16 And why did you not, when you heard it, say: It does not beseem us that we should talk of it; glory be to Thee! this is a great calumny? 17 God admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers. 18 And God makes clear to you the communications; and God is Knowing,

[1] The incident referred to in this section took place when the Prophet, accompanied by his wife Ayesha, was returning from the expedition against Bani Mustaliq in the fifth year of the Hejira. Ayesha had gone out on a private occasion, but when she returned she perceived that she had lost her necklace, and went back to search for it. In her absence the attendants, supposing her to be in her *howdah*, started while it was yet dark. When she returned, finding the camel and the men gone, she sat down there and was brought to Medina by Safwan, who was coming in the rear. Some mischievous persons from among the hypocrites spread false reports, slandering her, and some of the Muslims also associated themselves with the slander. Ayesha's innocence was at length established by this revelation, and those who had taken part in the accusation were punished. This is the grievous punishment referred to in the concluding words of the verse.

[2] He who took the main part thereof upon himself is said to be Abdulla bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the hypocrites, because he concocted the lie and circulated the false report.

[3] There was not a single witness nor any circumstance that could lend a colour to the false report.

Wise. 19 Those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter; and God knows while you do not know. 20 And were it not for God's grace on you and His mercy, and that God is Compassionate, Merciful.

SECTION 3.—Ayesha's Slanderers

21 O you who believe! do not follow the footsteps of the devil; and whoever follows the footsteps of the devil, then surely he bids the doing of indecency and evil; and were it not for God's grace upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been pure, but God purifies whom He pleases; and God is Hearing, Knowing. 22 And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in God's way, and they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that God should forgive you? And God is Forgiving, Merciful.[1] 23 Those who accuse chaste believing women, unaware (of the evil), are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous chastisement, 24 On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did. 25 On that day God will pay back to them in full their just reward, and they shall know that God is the evident Truth. 26 Unclean things are for unclean ones and unclean ones are for unclean things, and the good things are for good ones and the good ones are for good things; these are free from what they say; they shall have forgiveness and an honourable sustenance.

SECTION 4.—Preventive Measures against Fornication

27 O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and

[1] This verse was revealed in connection with the action of Abu Bakr, who had sworn not to allow maintenance to one of his relatives named Mistah, who had taken a part in spreading the false reports against Ayesha. It shows in the first place the broadmindedness of the Prophet, who after inflicting the legal punishment upon the culprits was required to bear them no ill-will, and hid no rancour in his breast even towards the slanderers of his own wife; revelation even required his companions to be kind and forgiving to them. Secondly, it mentions Abu Bakr, not by name, but as *one possessing grace and abundance*, the former of these words referring to his moral and spiritual superiority and the latter to abundance in wealth.

saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may
be mindful. 28 But if you do not find any one therein,
then do not enter them until permission is given to you;
and if it is said to you, Go back, then go back; this is
purer for you; and God is Cognizant of what you do.
29 It is no sin in you that you enter uninhabited houses
wherein you have your necessaries; and God knows what
you do openly and what you hide. 30 Say to the believing
men that they cast down their looks and guard their
private parts; that is purer for them; God is Aware of
what they do.[1] 31 And say to the believing women that
they cast down their looks and guard their private parts
and not display their ornaments except what appears
thereof,[2] and let them wear their head-coverings over their
bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their
husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands,
or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers,
or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their
women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male
servants not having need (of women), or the children who
have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women;
and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide
of their ornaments may be known; and turn to God all
of you, O believers! so that you may be successful.
32 And marry those among you who are single and those
who are fit among your male slaves and your female
slaves; [3] if they are needy, God will make them free from

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[1] The Quran does not only forbid evil, but also points out the way by walking in which man may be able to eschew it. From this injunction it appears further that there is no restriction as to women going out when they think it necessary, for if women were totally forbidden to go out of their houses, men would not have been required to cast down their eyes. In fact, the Holy Quran requires both men and women to keep their eyes cast down, so that when they meet each other, neither should men stare at women nor women at men. In a society in which women never appeared in public, the injunction to women given in the next verse, if they never left the compounds of their houses, would be equally absurd.

[2] *What appears thereof* signifies that which it is customary and natural to uncover. According to the best opinion, the face and the hands are excepted. The exposure of such parts as the neck, the bosom, or the arms is forbidden, and it is for this reason that the wearing of a head-covering is recommended which should cover the bosom. An overcoat can serve the same purpose.

[3] The Holy Quran looks upon the married state as the normal state, and hence it enjoins that so far as possible those who are single should be married. It also requires both male and female slaves to be kept in

want out of His grace ; and God is Ample-giving, Know-
ing. 33 And let those who do not find the means to
marry keep chaste until God makes them free from want
out of His grace. And those who ask for a writing from
among those whom your right hands possess, give them
the writing if you know any good in them, and give them
of the wealth of God which He has given you ; [1] and do
not compel your slave girls to prostitution, when they
desire to keep chaste, in order to seek the frail good of
this world's life ; and whoever compels them, then after
their compulsion God is Forgiving, Merciful.[2] 34 And
We have sent to you clear communications and a de-
scription of those who have passed away before you, and
an admonition to those who guard (against evil).

SECTION 5.—Manifestation of Divine Light

35 God is the (giver of the) light in the heavens and the
earth ; a likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is
a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, (and) the glass is as it were
a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither
eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost gives light
though fire touch it not—light upon light—God guides to
His light whom He pleases, and God sets forth parables
for men, and God is Cognizant of all things : [3] 36 In

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a state of marriage. The keeping of concubines or unmarried slave-girls is clearly inconsistent with this.

[1] Every possible facility was afforded to the slave to earn his freedom. Though the practice of the master making such a contract with the slave prevailed before the advent of Islam, the important reform was introduced by Islam that when a slave desired such a contract to be made, the master should not refuse it. Twelve centuries before any attempt was made by any individual or community to legislate for the liberty of slaves, a dweller of the Arabian desert had laid down this noble institution, that if a slave asked for a writing of freedom, he was not only to be given that writing by the owner, but he was also to be provided with money to purchase his freedom, the only condition being *if you know any good in them*, i.e. if he is fit for work and able to earn his livelihood. Is there any other religious leader in the world who laid down a similar law for the liberty of slaves ? And, in addition, the duty was imposed upon the state of spending a part of the collections of the poor-rate upon this object, as stated in 9 : 60.

[2] Prostitution prevailed in Arabia before the advent of Islam, but these prostitutes came from the lowest class. Islam therefore enjoined that even slave-girls should be kept in a married state. Not to allow them to marry was equivalent to compelling them to live in prostitution. The prostitution prevailing in the centres of Western civilization can only be remedied by the adoption of the laws of Islam.

[3] In the parable that follows, Islam is represented as a likeness of the Divine Light, a light placed high on a pillar so as to illumine the whole

houses which God has permitted to be exalted and that
His name may be remembered in them;[1] there glorify
Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, 37 Men
whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the
remembrance of God and the keeping up of prayer and
the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the
hearts and the eyes shall turn about; 38 That God may
give them the best reward of what they have done, and
give them more out of His grace; and God gives sus-
tenance to whom He pleases without measure. 39 And
those who disbelieve, their deeds are like the mirage in a
desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water; until
when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there
he finds God, so He pays back to him his reckoning in
full; and God is quick in reckoning; 40 Or like darkness
in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is
another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) darkness
one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is
almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever God does
not give light, he has no light.[2]

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world; a light guarded by being placed in a glass so that no puff of wind can put it out; a light so resplendent that the glass itself in which it is placed is as a brilliant star. It should be noted that the religion of Islam is repeatedly spoken of as the *Divine light* in the Holy Quran; see 9 : 32, 61 : 8. Hence it is of Islam that the parable of Divine light speaks. The *blessed olive*, from which that light is lit, stands here for a symbol of Islam, as the fig stands for a symbol of Judaism; see 95 : 1. The blessed olive, which stands for a symbol of Islam, belongs neither to the East nor to the West. Even so is Islam, which must give light to both the East and the West, and which, therefore, does not specially belong to any one of them. The reference seems to be to the welding together of the East and the West in Islam, a prophecy which is now approaching its fulfilment in the awakening of the West to the truth of the principles of Islam.

[1] The Divine light spoken of in the last verse is here stated as being met with in certain houses, the distinctive mark of those houses being that the name of God is remembered in them, thus showing that these houses are the houses of the Muslims. The next verse makes it clearer. These houses, we are further told, though humble now, shall be *exalted* one day. And the exaltation of the humble huts of the Arab dwellers of the desert to royal palaces is too clear to need any comment as to the truth of this wonderful prophecy.

[2] As the first part of the section gives a picture of the brilliant and dazzling Divine light which is given to the believers, the last part describes the utter darkness of doubts and ignorance in which the unbelievers are. Their apparent hopes of success are compared to a mirage, and when they are undeceived of these they will find themselves in a darkness in which they will not be able to see anything.

SECTION 6.—**Manifestation of Divine Power**

41 Dost thou not see that God is He Whom do glorify
all those who are in the heavens and the earth, and the
(very) birds with expanded wings? He knows the prayer of
each one and its glorification, and God is Cognizant of
what they do. 42 And God's is the kingdom of the
heavens and the earth, and to God is the eventual coming.
43 Dost thou not see that God drives along the clouds,
then gathers them together, then piles them up, so that
thou seest the rain coming forth from their midst? And
He sends down of the clouds that are (like) mountains
wherein is hail, afflicting therewith whom He pleases and
turning it away from whom He pleases; the flash of His
lightning almost takes away the sight. 44 God turns over
the night and the day; surely there is a lesson in this
for those who have sight. 45 And God has created from
water every living creature: so of them is that which
walks upon its belly, and of them is that which walks
upon two feet, and of them is that which walks upon four;
God creates what He pleases; for God has power over all
things. 46 We have revealed clear communications, and
God guides whom He pleases to the right way. 47 And
they say: We believe in God and in the Apostle and we
obey; then a party of them turn back after this, and
these are not believers. 48 And when they are called to
God and His Apostle that he may judge between them, lo!
a party of them turn aside. 49 And if the truth be on
their side, they come to him quickly, obedient. 50 Is
there in their hearts a disease, or are they in doubt, or
do they fear that God and His Apostle will act wrongfully
towards them? Nay! they themselves are the unjust.

SECTION 7.—**Kingdom of Islam**

51 The response of the believers, when they are invited
to God and His Apostle that he may judge between them,
is only to say: We hear and we obey; and these it is
that are the successful. 52 And he who obeys God and
His Apostle, and fears God and is careful of (his duty to)
Him, these it is that are the achievers. 53 And they
swear by God with the most energetic of their oaths that

if thou command them they would surely go forth. Say :
Swear not ; reasonable obedience (is desired) ; surely God
is Aware of what you do. 54 Say : Obey God and obey
the Apostle ; but if you turn back, then on him rests
that which is imposed on him and on you rests that which
is imposed on you ; and if you obey him, you are on the
right way ; and nothing rests on the Apostle but clear
delivering (of the message). 55 God has promised to
those of you who believe and do good that He will make
them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before
them, and that He will establish for them their religion
which He has chosen for them, and that He will, after
their fear, give them security in exchange ; they shall
serve Me, not associating aught with Me ; and whoever
is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgres-
sors.[1] 56 And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate
and obey the Apostle, so that mercy may be shown to you.
57 Think not that those who disbelieve shall escape in the
earth, and their abode is the fire ; and certainly evil is
the resort !

SECTION 8.—Respect for Privacy

58 O you who believe ! let those whom your right hands
possess and those of you who have not attained to puberty
ask permission of you three times ; before the morning
prayer, and when you put off your clothes at midday in
summer, and after the prayer of the nightfall ; these are
three times of privacy for you ; neither is it a sin for you
nor for them besides these ; some of you must go round
about (waiting) upon others ; thus does God make clear
to you the communications, and God is Knowing, Wise.
59 And when the children among you have attained to

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[1] This verse not only prophesies the establishment of the kingdom of Islam, but also its permanence, so that successors will be raised to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims made a ruling nation on earth. Islam at the time of the revelation of this chapter, or these verses, was still surrounded by enemies on all sides ; there was still fear for the believers, as the verse clearly shows, and idol-worship still had the upper hand in Arabia. The triumph of Islam which is prophesied in the parable of the Divine light first, and the gradual advent of which is referred to afterwards, is here predicted in the clearest and most emphatic terms. The concluding words show that the temporal power of the Muslims would be weakened if they are ungrateful.

puberty, let them seek permission as those before them sought permission; thus does God make clear to you His communications, and God is Knowing, Wise.
60 And (as for) women advanced in years[1] who do not hope for a marriage, it is no sin for them if they put off their cloaks without displaying their ornaments; and if they restrain themselves it is better for them; and God is Hearing, Knowing.
61 There is no blame on the blind man, nor is there blame on the lame, nor is there blame on the sick, nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses, or your fathers' houses, or your mothers' houses, or your brothers' houses, or your sisters' houses, or your paternal uncles' houses, or your paternal aunts' houses, or your maternal uncles' houses, or your maternal aunts' houses, or what you possess the keys of, or your friends' (houses). It is no sin in you that you eat together or separately. So when you enter houses, greet your people with a salutation from God, blessed (and) goodly; thus does God make clear to you the communications, that you may understand.

SECTION 9.—Importance of Public Affairs

62 Only those are believers who believe in God and His Apostle, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they go not away until they have asked his permission. Those who ask thy permission are they who believe in God and His Apostle. So when they ask thy permission for some affair of theirs, give permission to whom thou pleasest of them, and ask forgiveness for them from God; for God is Forgiving, Merciful.
63 Do not hold the Apostle's calling (you) among you to be like your calling one to the other; God indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves; therefore let those beware who go against his order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.
64 Now surely God's is whatever is in the heavens and the earth; He knows indeed that to which you conform yourselves, and on the day on which they are returned to Him, He will inform them of what they did; and God is Cognizant of all things.

[1] Lit., women who have ceased to bear children and to have the menstrual discharge.

CHAPTER 25

AL-FURQÂN: THE DISTINCTION

(*Mecca—6 sections; 77 verses*)

THIS chapter is entitled the *Furqán* signifying the bringing about of a distinction between truth and falsehood. The object is to show that the Holy Quran shall work out a transformation in the lives of its followers; that is to say, it shall make them morally great, thus supplementing, as it were, what is stated in the last chapter that the Muslims shall become temporally great.

The chapter opens with the statement that the Holy Prophet's message was for all nations of the world, and, as the last exposition of the doctrine of Divine Unity, it must unite all the nations and uproot all sorts of polytheism; the Unity of God and the unity of humanity must go hand-in-hand. The unbelievers objected to his being a mortal, and to this an answer is given in the concluding words of the second section, which asserts the truth of the warning. The third section points out that a distinction shall be finally brought about between the good and the evil, and refers to the day of distinction. These general statements are followed by concrete instances of the fate of previous peoples, some of which are very briefly referred to in the fourth section, which ends by referring to the sad plight in which Arabia was before the advent of Islam. The fifth section opens by drawing attention to the fact that the darkness which prevailed over Arabia was gradually giving place to the light of the new faith, and signs of life were already being witnessed, being a clear indication of the great transformation which Islam was destined to bring about, that transformation itself being the subject-matter of the concluding section of the chapter. The chapter is a later Meccan revelation.

SECTION 1.—A Warner for all Nations

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Blessed is He Who sent down the Distinction upon
His servant that he may be a warner to the nations;
2 He, Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth,
and Who did not take to Himself a son, and Who has no
associate in the kingdom, and Who created every thing,
then ordained for it a measure.[1] 3 And they have taken
besides Him gods, who do not create anything while they
are themselves created, and they control not for themselves

[1] There exists a *measure* for everything created; that is the only *taqdir* of which the Holy Quran speaks. So *taqdir* is the law to which any thing is subject.

any harm or profit, and they control not death, nor life,
nor raising (the dead) to life. 4 And those who disbelieve
say: This is nothing but a lie which he has forged, and
other people have helped him at it; so indeed they have
done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood. 5 And they
say: The stories of the ancients—he has got them written
—so these are read out to him morning and evening.
6 Say: He has revealed it Who knows the secret in the
heavens and the earth; He is ever Forgiving, Merciful.
7 And they say: What is the matter with this Apostle
that he eats food and goes about in the marts; why has
not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have
been a warner with him? 8 Or, (why is not) a treasure
sent down to him, or he is made to have a garden from
which he should eat? And the unjust say: You do not
follow any but a man deprived of reason. 9 See what
likenesses do they apply to thee, so they have gone astray,
and they shall not be able to find a way.

SECTION 2.—Truth of the Warning

10 Blessed is He Who, if He please, will give thee what
is better than this, gardens in which rivers flow, and He
will give thee palaces.[1] 11 But they reject the hour, and
We have prepared a burning fire for him who rejects the
hour. 12 When it shall come into their sight from a
distant place, they shall hear its vehement raging and
roaring. 13 And when they are cast into a narrow place
in it, bound, they shall there call out for destruction.
14 Call not this day for one destruction, but call for de-
structions many. 15 Say: Is this better or the abiding
garden which the righteous are promised? That shall be
a reward and a resort for them. 16 They shall have
therein what they desire, abiding (in it); it is a promise
which it is proper to be prayed for from thy Lord. 17 And
on the day when He shall gather them, and whatever they
served besides God, He shall say: Was it you who led
astray these My servants, or did they themselves go astray
from the path? 18 They shall say: Glory be to Thee;

[1] The gardens of Mesopotamia and the palaces of Persia and the Cæsars were given to the followers of the Holy Prophet as proof of the truth of this prophecy.

it was not beseeming for us that we should take any
guardians besides Thee, but Thou didst make them and
their fathers to enjoy until they forsook the reminder,
and they were a lost people. 19 So they shall indeed give
you the lie in what you say, then you shall not be able
to ward off or help; and whoever among you is unjust,
We will make him taste a great chastisement. 20 And
We have not sent before thee any messengers but they
surely ate food and went about in the markets; and We
have made some of you a trial for others. Will you bear
patiently? And thy Lord is ever Seeing.

PART XIX

SECTION 3.—The Day of Distinction

21 And those who do not hope for Our meeting, say:
Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why)
do we not see our Lord? Now certainly they are too
proud of themselves and have revolted in great revolt.
22 On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall
be no good news on that day for the guilty, and they shall
say: Let there be an inviolable obstruction. 23 And We
will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall
render them as scattered motes. 24 The dwellers of the
garden shall on that day be in a better abiding-place and
a better resting-place. 25 And on the day when the
heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds, and the angels
shall be sent down a sending.[1] 26 The kingdom on that
day shall rightly belong to the Beneficent God, and a hard
day shall it be for the unbelievers. 27 And the day when
the unjust one shall bite his hands, saying: O! would
that I had taken a way with the Apostle; 28 O woe is
me! would that I had not taken such a one for a friend!
29 Certainly he led me astray from the reminder after it
had come to me; and the devil fails to aid man. 30 And
the Apostle cried out: O my Lord! my people have indeed
treated this Quran as a forsaken thing. 31 And thus

[1] This description of the day of Badr is also given in 8:11, where the falling of rain is clearly mentioned, and on the same occasion is also mentioned the coming of the angels. The next verse shows that it will be a day of victory for the Muslims, the believers in the Beneficent God, and a hard day for the unbelievers.

have We made for every prophet an enemy from among the
guilty, and sufficient is thy Lord as a Guide and a Helper.
32 And those who disbelieve say: Why has not the Quran
been revealed to him all at once? Thus, that We may
establish thy heart by it and We have arranged it well in
arranging.[1] 33 And they shall not bring to thee any
argument but We have brought to thee (one) with truth
and best in significance.[2] 34 Those who shall be gathered
upon their faces to hell are in a worse plight and straying
farther away from the path.

SECTION 4.—**Hopeless plight of Pre-Islamic Arabia**

35 And We gave Moses the Book and We appointed with
him his brother Aaron an aider. 36 Then We said: Go
you both to the people who reject Our communications;
so We destroyed them with utter destruction. 37 And as
to the people of Noah, when they rejected the apostles,
We drowned them, and made them a sign for men, and
We have prepared a painful chastisement for the unjust,
38 And Ad and Samood and the dwellers of the Rass and
many generations between them.[3] 39 And to every one
We gave examples and every one did We destroy with
utter destruction. 40 And they have (often) passed by the
town on which was rained an evil rain.[4] Do they not then
see it? Nay! they do not hope to be raised again.
41 And when they see thee, they do not take thee for
aught but a mockery: Is this he whom God has raised to
be an apostle? 42 He had well-nigh led us astray from
our gods had we not adhered to them patiently![5] And

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[1] The meaning is that the Quran was revealed piecemeal, so that under the varying circumstances through which the Prophet passed, the Divine revelation might be a source of strength to his heart; and then, as it were to refute any suggestion that the revelation might remain a disorderly collection of fragments revealed under different circumstances, having no connection with each other, it is added that the entire arrangement was also Divinely accomplished. The verse contradicts in the clearest terms the false opinion that the Quran was arranged by Abu Bakr or Usman, for its arrangement according to this verse was a part of the Divine scheme, brought about in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet who was the recipient of the Divine revelation.

[2] I.e. all objections have been answered in the Holy Quran.

[3] According to Zajjaj, *Rass* was a country in which a part of the tribe of Samood resided; others say that *Rass* is the name of a town in Yamama.

[4] This town is Sodom, which was situated on the way to Syria.

[5] The idol-worship of Arabia was a by-word among the nations, yet so powerful was the preaching of the Prophet that it had well-nigh shaken

they will know, when they see the chastisement, who is
straying farther off from the path. 43 Hast thou seen
him who takes his low desires for his god? [1] Wilt thou
be a protector over him? 44 Or dost thou think that
most of them do hear or understand? They are simply
as cattle; [2] nay, they are straying farther off from the
path.

SECTION 5.—First Signs of a Transformation

45 Hast thou not considered (the work of) thy Lord, how
He extends the shade? And if He had pleased He would
have made it stationary; then We have made the sun
an indication of it. 46 Then We take it to Ourselves, taking
little by little.[3] 47 And He it is Who has made the night
a covering for you, and the sleep a rest, and He has made
the day to rise up again. 48 And He it is Who sends
the winds as good news before His mercy; and We send
down pure water from the cloud, 49 That We may give
life thereby to a dead land [4] and give it for drink, out
of what We have created, to cattle and many people.
50 And We repeat this to them in different forms that
they may be mindful, but the greater number of men do
not consent to aught except denying. 51 And if We had
pleased We would have raised a warner in every town.
52 So do not follow the unbelievers, and strive against them
a mighty striving with it.[5] 53 And He it is Who has
made the two seas to flow freely, the one sweet that subdues
thirst by its sweetness, and the other salt that burns by
its saltness; [6] and between the two He has made a barrier

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that belief, and it was out of sheer stubbornness that they now adhered to it.

[1] This verse shows how broad is the idea of *shirk* or *polytheism* according to the Holy Quran. It is not simply worship of idols that is condemned, but blindly following one's desires is equally condemned as idolatry.

[2] These words sum up the condition of Arabia before Islam.

[3] The sun of righteousness had risen, and there were clear indications that the shadows of darkness would disappear, but, as in physical nature, they would not disappear suddenly, but gradually, diminishing little by little.

[4] Even thus was Arabia receiving new life.

[5] This verse affords a clear proof of the significance of the word *jihád*, as used in the Holy Quran. The greatest *jihád* which a Muslim can carry out is one by means of the Quran, to which the personal pronoun *it* at the end of the verse unquestionably refers, and not with the *sword*.

[6] The reference seems to be to rain-water and sea-water respectively. The barrier is the law which prevents salt from rising up along with water.

and inviolable obstruction. 54 And He it is Who has created man from the water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship, and thy Lord is Powerful. 55 And they serve besides God that which neither profits them nor causes them harm; and the unbeliever is an aider against his Lord. 56 And We have not sent thee but as a giver of good news and as a warner. 57 Say: I do not ask you aught in return except that he, who will, may take the way to his Lord. 58 And rely on the Everliving Who dies not, and celebrate His praise; and sufficient is He as being aware of the faults of His servants, 59 Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods, and He holds control on the throne; the Beneficent God, so ask the One aware of it. 60 And when it is said to them: Make obeisance to the Beneficent God, they say: And who is the Beneficent God? Shall we make obeisance to what thou biddest us? And it adds to their aversion.

SECTION 6.—**The Transformation wrought**

61 Blessed is He Who made the stars in the heavens and made therein a sun and a shining moon. 62 And He it is Who made the night and the day to follow each other for him who desires to be mindful or desires to be thankful. 63 And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say, Peace.[1] 64 And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing. 65 And they who say: O our Lord! turn away from us the chastisement of hell; for the chastisement thereof is a lasting evil: 66 It is an evil abode and (evil) place to stay. 67 And they who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean. 68 And they who do not call upon another god with God and do not slay the soul which God has forbidden except in the requirements of justice and (who) do not commit fornication; and he who does this shall find a requital of sin; 69 The chastisement

[1] The description of the righteous given here shows how great was the transformation wrought by the advent of the Holy Prophet, a people at the depth of degradation being converted into such righteous servants of God.

shall be doubled to him on the day of resurrection, and
he shall abide therein in abasement ; 70 Except him who
repents and believes and does a good deed ; so these are they
of whom God changes the evil deeds to good ones, and
God is Forgiving, Merciful. 71 And whoever repents
and does good, he turns to God a (goodly) turning. 72 And
they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when
they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly. 73 And
they who, when reminded of the communications of their
Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind. 74 And
they who say : O our Lord ! grant us in our wives and
our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides for
the righteous. 75 These shall be rewarded with high
places because they were patient, and shall be offered
therein greetings and salutations. 76 Abiding therein;
goodly the abode and the resting-place. 77 Say : My
Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer ;
now you have indeed rejected (the truth), so the cleaving
(punishment) shall soon come.

CHAPTER 26

ASH-SHU'ARÁ : THE POETS

(*Mecca*—11 *sections ;* 227 *verses*)

THE title of this chapter, *The Poets*, is taken from a reference to the poets in v. 224, where it is clearly stated that the Holy Quran is not the work of a poet, because it in no way resembles the work of poets. One of the frequent charges which its bewildered opponents brought against the Holy Quran was that it was a poet's work. The Quran has often rebutted this charge. This has been effectively accomplished here by showing that the Holy Prophet's work and preaching were similar in detail to the work and preaching of preceding prophets, bearing no resemblance whatever to the work of poets.

While the prophets mentioned herein are identical with those in the 7th chapter, where they appear chronologically, their order in this chapter is different. In the opening section of the chapter the Holy Prophet is given a consolation, and told not to grieve too much on account of the unbelief of the people, nor yet to despair of their reformation, because human nature must eventually revolt against the worship of objects lower than, or like itself. The history of Moses is taken up in the next three sections from the time of his message to Pharaoh to that of the monarch's ill-fated end, together with his hosts, in the sea. The reason for giving

precedence to the history of Moses here will be found below, where the arrangement of chapters is dealt with. The fifth section takes us back to Abraham because that patriarch gives us the connecting link between the houses of Israel and Ishmael, or between the two great prophets, Moses and Muhammad. The next five sections are devoted to the narratives of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, and Shuaib in chronological order; the fate of the opponents of each of these prophets being, as it were, a warning to the opponents of the Holy Prophet: this is clearly indicated in the concluding section which rebuts the charge that the Prophet was a soothsayer or a poet.

The three chapters, 26th, 27th, and 28th, form a group not only connected in subject, but also belonging to the same period. All three were undoubtedly revealed at Mecca, and belong to the middle Meccan period. The chief point in each is the story of Moses, with which they all begin, although the 27th chapter makes only a brief allusion to it. In each case that story begins with Moses being called to prophethood at Mount Sinai with a special message for Pharaoh, ending with Pharaoh being drowned in the Red Sea; the later wanderings of the Israelites are not referred to in any of them. This common thread of the narrative in all three chapters gives us a clue to the subject-matter and to their connection with what has gone before. It will be noted that the 25th chapter spoke of the *furqán*, or the great distinctive sign that was given to the Holy Prophet, and these three chapters really supply the *furqán* or distinctive sign given to Moses, which was the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; hence the narrative is in all cases brought to an end with that incident. This group of three chapters may therefore be called an illustration of the chapter which they follow.

SECTION 1.—**The Prophet is consoled**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Benignant, Hearing, Knowing God.[1] 2 These are
the verses of the Book that makes clear. 3 Perhaps thou
wilt kill thyself with grief because they do not believe.[2]

[1] I take *tá* as standing for *Latif*, meaning *Benignant*, *sín* as *standing* for *Samí'*, meaning *Hearing*, and *mím* as standing for *'Alím*, meaning *Knowing*. I may, however, suggest another interpretation. Every one of the three chapters of this group opens with the same letters, only the final *mím* being omitted in the 27th chapter. And as these chapters speak in particular of the calling up of Moses at Mount Sinai, *tá sín* may stand for *Túr-i-Siná*, or the *Mount Sinai*, and *mím* may stand for *Moses*; attention is thus called in these letters to the *call of Moses at Mount Sinai*, the Mosaic revelation being no doubt an evidence of the truth of the Holy Prophet's revelation; see 28 : 46–49.

[2] Other prophets may have cursed a generation and warned it of the doom awaiting it, but none was ever anxious on account of its fate to the same extent as the Holy Prophet. He had been informed by Divine revelation of the doom of an evil generation, but instead of cursing it, he exerted himself heroically to save his people by bringing about a mighty transformation among them, a transformation for which he was so anxious

4 If We please We should send down upon them a sign
from the heaven, so that their necks should stoop to it.[1]
5 And there does not come to them a new reminder from
the Beneficent God but they turn aside from it. 6 So
they have indeed rejected (the truth), therefore the news
of that which they mock shall soon come to them. 7 Do
they not see the earth, how many of every noble kind We
have caused to grow in it? 8 Surely there is a sign in
this, but most of them do not believe. 9 And truly thy
Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 2.—Moses is sent to Pharaoh

10 And when thy Lord called out to Moses, saying:
Go to the unjust people, 11 The people of Pharaoh; will
they not guard (against evil)? 12 He said: O my Lord!
I fear that they will reject me: 13 And my breast
straitens, and my tongue is not eloquent, therefore send
Thou to Aaron (to help me); 14 And they have a crime
against me, so I fear that they may slay me.[2] 15 He said:
By no means; go you both with Our signs; We are with
you, hearing: 16 Then come to Pharaoh, and say: We
are the messengers of the Lord of the worlds: 17 That
send with us the children of Israel. 18 (Pharaoh) said:
Did we not bring thee up as a child among us, and thou
didst tarry among us for (many) years of thy life: 19 And
thou didst (that) deed of thine which thou didst and thou
art one of the ungrateful. 20 He said: I did it then while
I was of those unable to see the right course:[3] 21 So I
fled from you when I feared you, then my Lord granted
me wisdom and made me of the apostles: 22 And is it a

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that he is described here as almost killing himself with grief. It was the utmost limit of sympathy for the sufferings of humanity, the practical sympathy of a true reformer, not the wild or sentimental talk of a dreamer.

[1] Such a sign was sent at Badr and upon the conquest of Mecca. In the former place their chiefs were laid low and in the latter they accepted submission.

[2] The reference is to the killing of the Egyptian; see 28:15. It should be noted that Moses only says that the people of Pharaoh charged him with a crime, not that he was actually guilty.

[3] One of the significances of *dalla* is *he was perplexed*, or *confused, and unable to see his right course.* Moses' taking the law into his own hands to punish a guilty man, was owing to his being confused at the moment as to the step which he should take, *so he struck him with his fist* (28:15). Death was really accidental, not intentional; striking with the fist not being ordinarily sufficient to cause the death of a person.

favour of which thou remindest me that thou hast enslaved
the children of Israel? 23 Pharaoh said: And who is
the Lord of the worlds? 24 He said: The Lord of the
heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you
would be sure. 25 (Pharaoh) said to those around him:
Do you not hear? 26 He said: Your Lord and the
Lord of your fathers of old. 27 Said he: Surely your
apostle who is sent to you is mad. 28 He said: The
Lord of the east and the west and what is between them, if
you understand. 29 Said he: If thou wilt take a god
besides me, I will put thee in the prison. 30 He said:
What! even if I bring to thee something manifest?
31 Said he: Bring it then, if thou art of the truthful ones.
32 So he cast down his rod, and lo! it was an obvious
serpent. 33 And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it
appeared white to the onlookers.

SECTION 3.—Moses and the Enchanters

34 (Pharaoh) said to the chiefs around him: Surely
this is a skilful enchanter, 35 Who desires to turn you
out of your land with his enchantment; what is it then
that you advise? 36 They said: Give him and his
brother respite and send heralds into the cities: 37 That
they should bring to thee every skilful enchanter. 38 So
the enchanters were gathered together at the appointed
time on the fixed day, 39 And it was said to the people:
Will you gather together? 40 Haply we may follow the
enchanters, if they are the vanquishers. 41 And when the
enchanters came, they said to Pharaoh: Shall we get a
reward if we are the vanquishers? 42 He said: Yes, and
you will then be of those who are near (to my person).
43 Moses said to them: Cast what you are going to cast.
44 So they cast down their cords and their rods and said:
By Pharaoh's power we shall surely be victorious.
45 Then Moses cast down his rod, and lo! it swallowed
up the lies they made. 46 And the enchanters were thrown
down prostrate. 47 They said: We believe in the Lord
of the worlds: 48 The Lord of Moses and Aaron. 49 Said
he: You believe in him before I give you permission;
surely he is the chief of you who taught you the enchant-
ment, so you shall know: I will cut off your hands and

your feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all.
50 They said: No harm; to our Lord we go back:
51 We hope that our Lord will forgive us our wrongs
because we are the first to believe.

SECTION 4.—**Pharaoh is drowned**

52 And We revealed to Moses, saying: Go away with
My servants travelling by night, for you will be pursued.
53 So Pharaoh sent heralds into the cities: 54 These are
a small company: 55 And they have enraged us: 56 And
surely we are a vigilant multitude. 57 So We turned them
out of gardens and springs, 58 And treasures and goodly
dwellings, 59 Even so. And We gave them as a heritage
to the children of Israel.[1] 60 And they pursued them
at sunrise. 61 So when the two hosts saw each other, the
companions of Moses cried out: We are surely overtaken.
62 He said: By no means; my Lord is with me; He
will show me the way. 63 And We revealed to Moses:
Seek a way into the sea with thy staff. So it clove asunder,
and each party was like a huge mound.[2] 64 And We
brought near, there, the others. 65 And We saved
Moses and those with him, all of them. 66 Then We
drowned the others. 67 Surely there is a sign in this,
but most of them do not believe. 68 And truly thy Lord
is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 5.—**Abraham**

69 And recite to them the story of Abraham. 70 When
he said to his sire and his people: What do you worship?
71 They said: We worship idols, so we shall be their
votaries. 72 He said: Do they hear you when you call?
73 Or do they profit you or cause you harm? 74 They
said: Nay, we found our fathers doing so. 75 He said:
Have you considered what you worship: 76 You and

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[1] The pronoun *them* refers to gardens and springs, etc., in general, and not to the particular gardens, etc., from which the Egyptians were turned out. The heritage of gardens and treasures was given to the Israelites in the land of Canaan, the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

[2] The sea had cloven asunder and gone back, thus leaving a *dry way* (20 : 77) for the Israelites. *Each party* may either refer to the Egyptians and the Israelites or to the several parties into which the large number of Israelites may have necessarily been divided. Or, the meaning may be that each wave as it receded was like a huge mountain.

your ancient sires? 77 They are enemies to me, but
not (so) the Lord of the worlds: 78 Who created me, and
He has shown me the way: 79 And He Who gives me
to eat and gives me to drink: 80 And when I am sick,
He restores me to health: 81 And He Who will cause me
to die, then give me life: 82 And Who, I hope, will forgive
me my mistakes on the day of judgment: 83 My Lord!
grant me wisdom, and join me with the good: 84 And
ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity: 85 And
make me of the heirs of the garden of bliss: 86 And for-
give my sire, for he is of those who have gone astray:
87 And disgrace me not on the day when they are raised,
88 The day on which property will not avail, nor sons,
89 Except him who comes to God with a heart free (from
evil). 90 And the garden shall be brought near for the
righteous, 91 And the hell shall be made manifest to
the erring ones, 92 And it shall be said to them: Where
are those that you used to worship 93 Besides God?
Can they help you or yet help themselves? 94 So they
shall be thrown down into it, they and the erring ones,
95 And the hosts of the devil, all. 96 They shall say
while they contend therein: 97 By God! we were cer-
tainly in manifest error, 98 When we made you equal to
the Lord of the worlds: 99 And none but the guilty
led us astray: 100 So we have no intercessors, 101 Nor
a true friend: 102 If we could but once return, we would
be of the believers. 103 Surely there is a sign in this,
but most of them do not believe. 104 And truly thy
Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 6.—Noah

105 The people of Noah rejected the apostles. 106 When
their brother Noah said to them: Will you not guard
(against evil)? 107 I am a faithful apostle to you:
108 Therefore guard against (the punishment of) God and
obey me: 109 And I do not ask you any reward for it;
my reward is only with the Lord of the worlds: 110 So
guard against (the punishment of) God and obey me.
111 They said: Shall we believe in thee while the meanest
follow thee? 112 He said: And what knowledge have
I of what they do? 113 Their account is only with my
Lord, if you know: 114 And I am not going to drive

away the believers: 115 I am naught but a plain warner.
116 They said: If thou desist not, O Noah, thou shalt
certainly be of those stoned to death. 117 He said:
My Lord! my people give me the lie: 118 So judge Thou
between me and them with a (just) judgment, and deliver
me and those who are with me of the believers. 119 So
We delivered him and those with him in the laden ark.
120 And We drowned the rest afterwards. 121 Surely
there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe.
122 And truly thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 7.—Hud

123 Ad gave the lie to the apostles. 124 When their
brother Hud said to them: Will you not guard (against
evil)? 125 I am a faithful apostle to you: 126 There-
fore guard against (the punishment of) God and obey me:
127 And I do not ask you any reward for it; my reward
is only with the Lord of the worlds: 128 Do you build on
every height a monument? Vain is it that you do:
129 And you make strong fortresses that perhaps you
may abide: 130 And when you lay hands (on men) you
lay hands (like) tyrants: 131 So guard against (the
punishment of) God and obey me: 132 And be careful
of (your duty to) Him Who has given you abundance of
what you know: 133 He has given you abundance of
cattle and children: 134 And gardens and fountains:
135 I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.
136 They said: It is the same to us whether thou admonish
or art not one of the admonishers: 137 This is naught
but a custom of the ancients: 138 And we are not going
to be chastised. 139 And they gave him the lie, so We
destroyed them. Surely there is a sign in this, but most
of them do not believe. 140 And truly thy Lord is the
Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 8.—Salih

141 Samood gave the lie to the apostles; 142 When
their brother Salih said to them: Will you not guard
(against evil)? 143 I am a faithful apostle to you:
144 Therefore guard against (the punishment of) God
and obey me: 145 And I do not ask you any reward for

it; my reward is only with the Lord of the worlds:
146 Will you be left secure in what is here: 147 In gardens
and fountains, 148 And corn-fields and palm-trees having
fine spadices? 149 And you hew houses out of the
mountains exultingly: 150 So guard against (the punish-
ment of) God and obey me: 151 And do not obey the
bidding of the extravagant: 152 Who make mischief
in the land and do not act aright. 153 They said: Thou
art only of the deluded ones: 154 Thou art naught but a
mortal like ourselves; bring a sign if thou art one of the
truthful. 155 He said: This is a she-camel; she shall
have her portion of water, and you have your portion of
water on an appointed time:[1] 156 And do not touch her
with evil, lest the chastisement of a grievous day should
overtake you. 157 But they stabbed her, and were sorry
(for it); 158 And the chastisement overtook them. Surely
there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe.
159 And truly thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 9.—Lot

160 The people of Lot gave the lie to the apostles.
161 When their brother Lot said to them: Will you not
guard (against evil)? 162 I am a faithful apostle to
you: 163 Therefore guard against (the punishment of)
God and obey me: 164 And I do not ask you any reward
for it; my reward is only with the Lord of the worlds:
165 What! do you come to the males from among the
creatures, 166 And leave what your Lord has created
for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people exceeding
limits. 167 They said: If thou desist not, O Lot! thou
shalt surely be of those who are expelled. 168 He said:
I am of those who utterly abhor your doing: 169 My
Lord! deliver me and my followers from what they do.
170 So We delivered him and his followers all, 171 Except
an old woman, among those who remained behind.
172 And We utterly destroyed the others. 173 And
We rained down upon them a rain, and evil was the rain

[1] Samood are described in v. 149 as hewing houses out of mountains, and, as it appears from here and 54 : 28, the springs of water seem to have been few, and access to these was probably specially guarded, so that they were open only at particular times. Salih seems to have demanded that the she-camel should not be refused a drink.

of those warned. 174 Surely there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe. 175 And truly thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 10.—Shuaib

176 The dwellers of the thicket[1] gave the lie to the apostles. 177 When Shuaib said to them: Will you not guard (against evil)? 178 I am a faithful apostle to you: 179 Therefore guard against (the punishment of) God and obey me: 180 And I do not ask you any reward for it; my reward is only with the Lord of the worlds: 181 Give a full measure and be not of those who diminish: 182 And weigh (things) with a right balance: 183 And do not wrong men of their things, and do not act corruptly in the earth, making mischief: 184 And guard against (the punishment of) Him Who created you and the former nations. 185 They said: Thou art only of those deluded: 186 And thou art naught but a mortal like ourselves, and we know thee to be of the liars: 187 So cause a portion of the heaven to come down upon us, if thou art one of the truthful. 188 He said: My Lord knows best what you do. 189 And they called him a liar, so the chastisement of the day of covering overtook them; it was the chastisement of a grievous day. 190 Surely there is a sign in this, but most of them do not believe. 191 And truly thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 11.—Not a Soothsayer's nor a Poet's Work

192 And this is truly a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. 193 The Faithful Spirit has descended with it[2] 194 Upon thy heart that thou mayest be of the warners, 195 In plain Arabic language. 196 And the same is indeed in the scriptures of the ancients.[3] 197 Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Israelites know it? 198 And if We had revealed it to any of the foreigners, 199 And he had recited it to them, they would not have believed therein. 200 Thus have We caused it to enter into the hearts of the guilty. 201 They will

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[1] They are the same as the people of Midian.

[2] The Faithful Spirit is the angel Gabriel who brought the Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet.

[3] I.e. prophecies regarding it are met with in the previous scriptures.

not believe in it until they see the painful chastisement;
202 And it shall come to them all of a sudden, while they
shall not perceive; 203 Then they will say: Shall we be
respited? 204 What! do they still seek to hasten on
Our chastisement? 205 Hast thou considered if We let
them enjoy themselves for years, 206 Then there comes
to them that with which they are threatened, 207 That
which they were made to enjoy shall not avail them?
208 And We did not destroy any town but it had (its)
warners 209 To remind, and We are never unjust.
210 And the devils have not come down with it; 211 And
it behoves them not, and they have not the power to do
(it). 212 They are far removed even from the hearing
of it.[1] 213 So call not upon another god with God, lest
thou be of those who are chastised. 214 And warn thy
nearest relations, 215 And be kind to him who follows
thee of the believers. 216 And if they disobey thee, say:
I am clear of what you do. 217 And rely on the Mighty,
the Merciful, 218 Who sees thee when thou standest up,
219 And thy turning over and over among those who
prostrate themselves (before God). 220 For He is the
Hearing, the Knowing. 221 Shall I inform you (of him)
upon whom the devils descend? 222 They descend upon
every lying, sinful one; 223 They incline their ears, and
most of them are liars. 224 And as to the poets, those
who go astray follow them. 225 Dost thou not see that
they wander about bewildered in every valley? 226 And
that they say that which they do not do,[2] 227 Except

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[1] The argument here is similar to that advanced by Jesus Christ when he said: "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself" (Matt. 12:26). The evil one cannot be the source of the Quran, for the Quran calls to righteousness, and the evil-doers do not even hear its call. See further vv. 221–223.

[2] The first suggestion of the unbelievers was that the Quran is the work of the devil. That being shown to be inconsistent with its very nature and with the righteousness it preaches, they make another suggestion, viz. that it is the work of a poet. As against this they are told that none of the characteristics of a poet's work are to be met with in the Quran. The poet pursues an aimless course, while the Quran has a set purpose before it, viz. to work out a pure transformation in the lives of those who follow it. In the second place, the poets say the things they do not perform, whereas the Prophet is not only a preacher of righteousness, but also an exemplar who translated into practice what he taught in theory. And the weightiest consideration of all is that the poets cannot utter prophecies like those which are met with in the Quran. It is to this that attention is called in the next verse.

those who believe and do good and remember God much, and defend themselves after they are oppressed; and those who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back.

CHAPTER 27

THE NAML

(Mecca—7 sections; 93 verses)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the mention of a tribe known as the *Naml* in v. 18, in connection with Solomon's march against the Queen of Sheba.

As regards the date of the revelation of this chapter and its place in the Quran, see headnote to the preceding chapter. The subject-matter, as there pointed out, is almost the same as the subject-matter of the last chapter. The Quran is the word of God which the Holy Prophet received from on high, just as Moses received a call at Mount Sinai, and the enemies of the former would be dealt with even as those of the latter. This is the substance of the first section. The second and third are devoted to Solomon's history, wherein the Holy Prophet's future greatness is indicated. It is really a part of the Mosaic history, for the Israelite kingdom attained its full glory under Solomon. As to the rest of the chapter, there is a brief reference, in the fourth section, to the histories of Salih and Lot, whose opponents were destroyed, and the fifth may be regarded as the natural sequel of it, viz. that the faithful shall be exalted. The sixth section states, however, that the Prophet's triumph was not to be marked by the utter destruction of his enemies, as in the case of these prophets, but by the ultimate spiritual resurrection of those who seemed to be quite deaf, dumb, and dead. That none but the great opponents would pass away is shown in the last section.

SECTION 1.—Moses

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Benignant, Hearing God! These are the verses of
the Quran and the Book that makes clear; 2 A guidance
and good news for the believers, 3 Who keep up prayer
and pay the poor-rate, and of the hereafter they are sure.
4 As to those who do not believe in the hereafter, We
have made their deeds fairseeming to them, but they

blindly wander on.[1] 5 These are they who shall have an evil chastisement, and in the hereafter they shall be the greatest losers. 6 And surely thou art made to receive the Quran from the Wise, the Knowing. 7 When Moses said to his family: I see fire; I will bring to you from it some news, or I will bring to you therefrom a burning firebrand so that you may warm yourselves. 8 When he came to it a voice came, saying: Blessed is that which is in the fire and that which is about it; and glory be to God, the Lord of the worlds:[2] 9 O Moses! I am God, the Mighty, the Wise: 10 And cast down thy rod. So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not return. O Moses! fear not; the apostles shall not fear in My presence: 11 Neither he who has been unjust, then he does good instead after evil, for I am the Forgiving, the Merciful: 12 And enter thy hand into the opening of thy bosom, it shall come forth white without evil; among nine signs to Pharaoh and his people; for they are a transgressing people. 13 So when Our clear signs came to them, they said: This is clear enchantment. 14 And they denied them unjustly and proudly while their souls had been convinced of them; consider, then, what was the end of the mischief-makers.

SECTION 2.—**Solomon**

15 And certainly We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they both said: Praise be to God Who has made us to excel many of His believing servants. 16 And Solomon was David's heir, and he said: O men! we have been taught the speech of birds,[3] and we have been

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[1] By *their deeds* are meant the deeds which they ought to perform, not the mischievous deeds which they were performing.

[2] The meaning is that the place where he saw the fire was a blessed one; see 28 : 30.

[3] See 21 : 79, where the birds are spoken of as having been made subservient to David and where the meaning is that birds were used as message-bearers as shown in the footnote. Evidently, *being taught the speech of birds* bears the same significance. The word *mantiq* used here is spoken only of the *speech of man* (see Raghib), and therefore strictly we cannot speak of the *mantiq* of birds. It is clear therefore that the word is used here metaphorically in reference to the letters which the birds bore, the letters no doubt containing the speech of man. As the bird was instrumental in carrying the letters from one place to another, the letters became

granted of every thing; surely this is manifest grace.
17 And his hosts of the jinn [1] and the men and the birds
were gathered to him, and they were formed into groups.
18 Until when they came to the valley of the Naml, a
Namlite said: O Naml! enter your houses, (that) Solomon
and his hosts may not crush you while they do not know.[2]
19 And he smiled, wondering at her word, and said: [3]
My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Thy
favour which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my
parents, and that I should do good such as Thou art pleased
with, and make me enter, by Thy mercy, among Thy
servants, the good ones. 20 And he reviewed the birds,
then said: How is it I see not Hudhud, or is it that he
is of the absentees? [4] 21 I will certainly chastise him with
a severe chastisement, or kill him, or he shall bring to me
a clear plea. 22 And he tarried not long, and said: I
have obtained knowledge of that which thou dost not
know and I have brought to thee sure information from
Saba. 23 I found a woman ruling over them, and she has
been given of everything and she has a mighty throne:
24 I found her and her people adoring the sun instead of
God, and the devil has made their deeds fairseeming to
them and thus turned them from the way, so they do
not go aright: 25 That they do not make obeisance to

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metaphorically the speech of the bird. It should be noted that Solomon is made to say *we have been taught*, not *I*, the plural referring evidently to David and Solomon both, as David also used birds for the same purpose

[1] See 34:12, 13, where these jinn are spoken of as making fortresses and images, etc., for Solomon, which shows too clearly that they were no others than the strangers whom Solomon subjugated and forced into service.

[2] *Wád-in-Naml* cannot be properly translated as *the valley of the ants*, for it is a proper noun, and according to Tajul Urus (see under the root *wady*), *Wad-in-Naml* is situated between *Jibrin* and *Asqalan*. And *Namla* is the name of a tribe, like *Mázin*, which literally signifies *the eggs of the ants*. And the *Namlah* are plainly spoken of as a tribe in the Qamus, which says under the word *barq*, *Abriqa is of the waters of Namlah.*

[3] Solomon was evidently pleased at the Namlites not taking up arms against him.

[4] By *Hudhud* is not to be understood the *lapwing*, but *a person of that name*. The Arab writers speak of a king of Himyar as *Hudad*, which is almost identical with Hudhud mentioned in the Quran. This shows that there is nothing strange in such a name being given to a man. The verses that follow show clearly that Solomon was speaking of one of his own officers: the infliction of severe punishment on a small bird by such a mighty monarch as Solomon, and the exposition of the great religious doctrine of Unity by the lapwing, are quite incomprehensible.

God, Who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and
the earth and knows what you hide and what you make
manifest: 26 God, there is no god but He; He is the
Lord of the mighty throne. 27 He said: We will see
whether thou hast told the truth or whether thou art
one of the liars: 28 Take this my letter and hand it over
to them, then turn away from them and see what (answer)
they return. 29 She said: O chiefs! an honourable
letter has been delivered to me: 30 It is from Solomon,
and it is in the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful:
31 That exalt not yourselves against me and come to me
in submission.

SECTION 3.—Solomon

32 She said: O chiefs! give me advice respecting my
affair; I never decide an affair until you are in my presence.
33 They said: We are possessors of strength and possessors
of mighty prowess, and the command is thine, therefore
see what thou wilt command. 34 She said: The kings,
when they enter a town, ruin it and make the noblest of
its people to be low, and thus they (always) do: 35 And
I am going to send a present to them, and shall wait to
see what (answer) do the messengers bring back. 36 So
when he came to Solomon, he said: What! will you
help me with wealth? But what God has given me is
better than what He has given you. Nay, you are exultant
because of your present: 37 Go back to them; we will
come to them with hosts which they shall have no power
to oppose, and we will expel them therefrom in abasement,
and they shall be in a state of ignominy. 38 He said:
O chiefs! which of you can bring to me her throne [1] before
they come to me in submission? 39 One audacious
among the jinn said: I will bring it to thee before thou
risest up from thy place; [2] and surely I have power to
do it and I am faithful. 40 One who had the knowledge
of the book said: I will bring it to thee in the twinkling
of an eye. Then when he saw it settled beside him, he
said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me

[1] The present spoken of in v. 35 seems to have contained a throne, and this is the throne referred to here.

[2] I.e. before Solomon ordered a march from the place where he was.

whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own soul, and whoever is ungrateful, surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured.
41 He said: Alter her throne for her;[1] we will see whether she follows the right way or is of those who do not go aright. 42 And when she came, it was said: Is thy throne like this? She said: It is as it were the same, and we were given the knowledge before it, and we were submissive. 43 And what she worshipped besides God prevented her, for she was of an unbelieving people. 44 It was said to her, Enter the palace; but when she saw it she deemed it to be a great expanse of water, and prepared herself to meet the difficulty.[2] He said: It is a palace made smooth with glass. She said: My Lord! surely I have been unjust to myself, and I submit with Solomon to God, the Lord of the worlds.[3]

SECTION 4.—**Salih and Lot**

45 And We sent to Samood their brother Salih, saying, Serve God; and lo! they became two parties contending with each other. 46 He said: O my people! why do you seek to hasten on the evil before the good? Why do you not ask forgiveness of God so that you may be dealt with mercifully? 47 They said: We have met with ill luck on account of thee and on account of those with thee. He said: The cause of your evil fortune is with God; nay, you are a people who are tried. 48 And there were in the city nine persons who made mischief in the

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[1] It is likely that the throne had on it indecent pictures or idolatrous images, and it was their removal that Solomon ordered.

[2] The use of the word *sáq* to signify *difficulty* or *distress* in many phrases is a commonplace of Arabic literature; and *Kashf-'anissáq* is a well-known idiomatic use of the word, meaning *preparing oneself for the difficulty.*

[3] The Holy Quran's description of the palace, and the purpose which it served, show Solomon's wisdom in affording an illustration of the working of the Divine hand in nature. He had built a palace of glass, the floor of which was also of glass, and under it ran water. The queen of Saba mistook the glass for the water which ran beneath, and when Solomon drew her attention to it, she at once realized her own error in worshipping outward objects, such as the sun, while the real force or the source of life was God.

In this the Quran contradicts the Bible, the letter holding that Solomon had gone over to idol-worship on account of his non-Israelite wives, while the Quran states that his wives were converts to his religion and believers in Divine Unity. Recent criticism accepts the Bible view to be erroneous.

land and did not act aright. 49 They said: Swear to
each other by God that we will make a sudden attack on
him and his family by night, then we will say to his heir:
We did not witness the destruction of his family, and we
are surely truthful.[1] 50 And they planned a plan, and
We planned a plan while they perceived not. 51 See,
then, what was the end of their plan: We destroyed them
and their people, all (of them). 52 So those are their
houses fallen down because they were unjust; surely there
is a sign in this for a people who know. 53 And We
delivered those who believed and who guarded (against
evil). 54 And (We sent) Lot, when he said to his people:
What! do you commit indecency while you see?
55 What! do you indeed approach men lustfully rather
than women? Nay, you are a people who act ignorantly.
56 But the answer of his people was no other except that
they said: Turn out Lot's followers from your town; they
are a people who would keep pure! 57 So We delivered
him and his followers except his wife; We ordained her
to be of those who remained behind. 58 And we rained
on them a rain, and evil was the rain of those warned.

SECTION 5.—**The Faithful shall be exalted**

59 Say: Praise be to God and peace on His servants
whom He has chosen. Is God better, or what they set
up (with Him)?

PART XX

60 Or, He Who created the heavens and the earth, and
sent down for you water from the cloud; then We cause
to grow thereby beautiful gardens; it is not possible for
you that you should make the trees thereof to grow. Is
there a god with God? Nay! they are a people who
deviate. 61 Or, He Who made the earth a resting-place, and
made in it rivers, and raised on it mountains, and placed
between the two seas a barrier? Is there a god with

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[1] There seems to be a prophetical reference here to the plot against the Holy Prophet, for the same plan was ultimately agreed upon by the Quraish to do away with him. One man from every tribe of the Quraish was selected, and all of them were to thrust their swords into his body simultaneously, so that no particular tribe could be held guilty; this was agreed upon immediately before the Prophet's flight to Medina, and thus the incident as relating to Salib is meant as a prophecy.

God? Nay! most of them do not know! 62 Or, Who
answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and
removes the evil, and makes you rulers in the earth.
Is there a god with God? Little is it that you mind!
63 Or, Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the
sea, and Who sends the winds as good news before His
mercy. Is there a god with God? Exalted be God above
what they set up (with Him). 64 Or, Who originates
the creation, then reproduces it, and Who gives you sus-
tenance from the heaven and the earth. Is there a god
with God? Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.
Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the
unseen but God; and they do not know when they shall
be raised. 66 Nay! their knowledge respecting the here-
after is slight and hasty; nay, they are in doubt about it;
nay, they are quite blind to it.

SECTION 6.—**Denial of Truth**

67 And those who disbelieve say: What! when we
have become dust and our fathers (too), shall we be
brought forth? 68 We have indeed been promised this,
we and our fathers before; these are naught but stories
of the ancients. 69 Say: Travel in the earth, and see
how was the end of the guilty. 70 And grieve not for
them and be not distressed because of what they plan.
71 And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you
are truthful? 72 Say: Maybe there may have drawn
near to you somewhat of that which you seek to hasten on.
73 And surely thy Lord is the Lord of grace to men, but
most of them are not grateful. 74 And thy Lord knows
what their breasts conceal and what they manifest.
75 And there is nothing concealed in the heaven and the
earth but it is in a clear book. 76 This Quran declares
to the children of Israel most of what they differ in.
77 And truly it is a guidance and a mercy for the believers.
78 Thy Lord will judge between them by His judgment,
and He is the Mighty, the Knowing. 79 Therefore rely on
God; surely thou art on the clear truth. 80 Thou dost
not make the dead to hear, nor dost thou make the deaf
to hear the call when they go back retreating.[1] 81 Nor

[1] This verse is a clear testimony to what is meant by the Prophet's raising of the dead; for here we are told that if the dead go back retreating,

canst thou be a guide to the blind out of their error; thou canst not make to hear (any one) except those who believe in Our communications, so they submit.
82 And when the word shall come to pass against them, We shall bring forth for them a creature from the earth that shall speak to them, because people did not believe in Our communications.[1]

SECTION 7.—**Opposition shall pass away**

83 And on the day when We will gather from every nation a party from among those who rejected Our communications, then they shall be formed into groups.
84 Until when they come, He will say: Did you reject My communications while you had no comprehensive knowledge of them? Or what was it that you did?
85 And the word shall come to pass against them because they were unjust, so they shall not speak.
86 Do they not consider that We have made the night that they may rest therein, and the day to give light? Surely there are signs in this for a people who believe.
87 And on the day when the trumpet shall be blown, those who are in the heavens and those who are in the earth shall be terrified except such as God please, and all shall come to Him abased.
88 And thou seest the mountains, thou thinkest them to be solid, and they shall pass away as the passing away of the cloud—the handiwork of God Who has made everything thoroughly; surely He is Aware of what you do.[2]
89 Whoever brings good, he shall have better than it; and they shall be secure from terror on that day.
90 And whoever brings evil, these shall be thrown down on their faces into the fire; shall you be rewarded (for)

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the Prophet cannot make them hear. Evidently this verse and the opening words of the following one speak of the reprobates who shut their eyes and closed their ears to all truth.

[1] The *dábbat ul ard* (lit. *the earthly creature*) is spoken of in the sayings of the Holy Prophet as one of the signs of the "Hour." The description of it given here, that it shall *speak*, shows clearly that the *dábbat ul ard* stands for a people bent low upon earth. Their *bringing forth* is a kind of punishment for the Muslims whom they shall overcome. Or, if *yukallimuhum* is taken as meaning *it shall wound them*, the reference may be to the plagues and pestilences of the latter days.

[2] In the passing away of the mountains there is a clear reference to the removal of the mighty men who opposed the Prophet's preaching as shown by the concluding words of the verse, which clearly speak of the punishment of the evil deeds by One who is aware of what they do.

aught except what you did? 91 I am commanded only
that I shall serve the Lord of this city, Who has made it
sacred, and His are all things: and I am commanded that
I should be of those who submit; 92 And that I should
recite the Quran. Therefore whoever goes aright, for his
own soul does he go aright, and whoever goes astray, say
(to him), I am only one of the warners. 93 And say: Praise
be to God, He will show you His signs so that you shall
recognize them; nor is thy Lord heedless of what you do.

CHAPTER 28

AL-QASAS: THE NARRATIVE

(*Mecca—9 sections; 88 verses*)

THE likeness to Moses is the chief theme of this chapter, and the revelation of Moses is here spoken of as clear evidence of the truth of the revelation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The first four sections of the chapter are taken up with a recital of the chief incidents of the life of Moses from the time of his birth to the time that he successfully led the Israelites out of Egypt, together with the drowning of the hosts of Egypt. Many of the details of this period are to be met with here that are not given elsewhere. Moses' narrative is followed by showing that a prophet like him had now appeared, to whose truth the revelation of Moses bore a clear testimony. The sixth section upholds the truth of the revelation of the Quran, while the seventh shows that its opponents shall be humbled. The eighth instances Korah, whose very wealth led to his ruin, and is a warning to the Quraish against placing too great faith upon earthly possessions, or it may be a warning to the Muslims against the time when they shall grow rich and powerful. The chapter ends with a declaration of the ultimate triumph of the Holy Prophet, and of his triumphal entry into the very city from whence he would be expelled.

SECTION 1.—Childhood of Moses

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Benignant, Hearing, Knowing God! 2 These are the
verses of the Book that makes clear. 3 We recite to
thee from the account of Moses and Pharaoh with truth
for a people who believe. 4 Pharaoh exalted himself in
the land and made its people into parties, weakening one
party from among them; he slaughtered their sons and
let their women live; surely he was one of the mischief-

makers. 5 And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the leaders and to make them the heirs, 6 And to grant them power in the land, and to make Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts see from them what they feared. 7 And We revealed to Moses' mother, saying: Give him suck, then when thou fearest for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve; for We will bring him back to thee and make him one of the apostles. 8 And Pharaoh's people took him up that he might be an enemy and a grief for them; for Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were wrong-doers. 9 And Pharaoh's wife said: A refreshment of the eye to me and to thee; do not slay him; maybe he will be useful to us, or we may take him for a son; and they did not perceive. 10 And the heart of Moses' mother was free (from anxiety); she would have almost disclosed it had We not strengthened her heart so that she might be of the believers. 11 And she said to his sister: Follow him up. So she watched him from a distance while they did not perceive. 12 And We did not allow him to suck before, so she said: Shall I point out to you the people of a house who will take care of him for you, and they will be kind to him? 13 So We gave him back to his mother that her eye might be refreshed, and that she might not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of God is true, but most of them do not know.

SECTION 2.—Moses kills an Egyptian

14 And when he attained his maturity and became full-grown, We granted him wisdom and knowledge; and thus do We reward those who do good. 15 And he went into the city at a time of unvigilance on the part of its people, and he found therein two men fighting, one being of his party and the other of his foes, and he who was of his party cried out to him for help against him who was of his enemies; so Moses struck him with his fist and caused his death. He said: This is on account of the devil's doing; for he is an enemy, openly leading astray.[1]

[1] The word "this," in Moses' statement, refers to the punishment which he had given to the Egyptian, the meaning being that it was on account

16 He said: My Lord! I have caused loss to myself,[1] so do Thou protect me. So He protected him; for He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. 17 He said: My Lord! because thou hast bestowed a favour on me, I shall never be a backer of the guilty. 18 And he was in the city, fearing, awaiting, when lo, he who had asked his assistance the day before was crying out to him for aid. Moses said to him: Thou art surely one erring manifestly. 19 So when he desired to seize him who was an enemy to them both, he said: O Moses! dost thou intend to kill me as thou didst kill a person yesterday? Thou desirest nothing but that thou shouldst be a tyrant in the land, and thou dost not desire to be of those who act aright. 20 And a man came running from the remotest part of the city. He said: O Moses! the chiefs are consulting together to slay thee, therefore depart (at once); I am of those who wish well to thee. 21 So he went forth therefrom, fearing, awaiting, (and) he said: My Lord! deliver me from the unjust people.

SECTION 3.—Moses at Midian

22 And when he turned his face towards Midian, he said: Maybe my Lord will guide me in the right path. 23 And when he came to the water of Midian, he found on it a group of men watering, and he found besides them two women keeping back (their flocks). He said: What is the matter with you? They said: We cannot water until the shepherds take away (their sheep) from the water, and our father is a very old man. 24 So he watered (their sheep) for them, then went back to the shade, and said: My Lord! I stand in need of whatever good Thou mayest send down to me. 25 And one of the two women came to him walking bashfully. She said: My father[2]

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of his devilish deed that the Egyptian had been so punished. The Rabbinical explanation of Exod. 2:12, which mentions Moses' slaying the Egyptian, is that the Egyptian merited death "because he had forced an Israelitish woman to commit adultery with him" (*Jewish En.*, vol. ix. p. 48). The Quran does not name the offence, but there is no doubt that it calls his offence a *devilish deed*. V. 17 shows clearly that Moses did not consider himself as one who had done an unjust deed or helped a guilty person.

[1] The meaning is that he had risked his own life in giving help to another.

[2] This was Jethro or Shuaib.

invites thee that he may give thee the reward of thy having watered for us. So when he came to him and gave to him the account, he said: Fear not, thou art secure from the unjust people. 26 Said one of them: O my father! employ him, surely the best of those that thou canst employ is the strong man, the faithful one. 27 He said: I desire to marry one of these two daughters of mine to thee on condition that thou shouldst serve me for eight years; but if thou complete ten, it will be of thy own free will,[1] and I do not wish to be hard to thee; if God please, thou wilt find me one of the upright. 28 He said: This shall be (an agreement) between me and thee; whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no wrong-doing to me; and God is a witness of what we say.

SECTION 4.—Moses goes to Pharaoh

29 And when Moses had fulfilled the term, and he journeyed with his family, he perceived on this side of the mountain a fire. He said to his family: Wait, I have seen a fire, maybe I will bring to you from it some news or a brand of fire, so that you may warm yourselves. 30 And when he came to it, a voice came from the right side of the valley in the blessed spot of the bush, saying: O Moses! I am God, the Lord of the worlds. 31 And saying: Cast down thy rod. So when he saw it in motion as if it were a serpent, he turned back retreating, and did not return. O Moses! come forward and fear not, thou art of those who are secure: 32 Enter thy hand into the opening of thy bosom, it will come forth white without evil, and be courageous in fear:[2] these two shall be two arguments from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs, for they are a transgressing people. 33 He said: My Lord! I killed one of them, so I fear lest they should slay

[1] According to Rabbinical accounts Moses lived with Jethro for ten years, which corroborates the Quranic story in substance (see *Jewish En.*). Jacob had made a similar agreement with Laban. But the story as related in the Quran contains a clear prophecy about the Holy Prophet, whose flight is really hinted at in the flight of Moses. It was after eight years that he re-entered Mecca (see v. 85, which contains a clear prophecy of his return to Mecca), while ten years was the whole period of his stay at Medina.

[2] Lit. *contract thy side* (or *hand*) *to thyself*. The metaphor is taken from a bird which does so when it finds itself safe from fear.

me: 34 And my brother, Aaron, he is more eloquent of tongue than I, therefore send him with me as an aider, verifying me; I fear that they would reject me. 35 He said: We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother, and We will give you both an authority, so that they shall not reach you; (go) with Our signs; you and those who follow you shall be uppermost. 36 So when Moses came to them with Our clear signs, they said: This is nothing but forged enchantment, and we never heard of it amongst our fathers of old. 37 And Moses said: My Lord knows best who comes with guidance from Him, and whose shall be the good end of the abode; the unjust do not prosper. 38 And Pharaoh said: O chiefs! I do not know of any god for you besides myself; therefore kindle a fire for me, O Haman, on dust, and prepare for me a lofty building so that I may obtain knowledge of Moses' God,[1] and I think him to be certainly a liar. 39 And he was unjustly proud in the land, he and his hosts, and they deemed that they will not be brought back to Us. 40 So We caught hold of him and his hosts, and We cast them into the sea; see how was the end of the unjust. 41 And We made them leaders who call to the fire, and on the day of resurrection they shall not be helped. 42 And We caused a curse to follow them in this world, and on the day of resurrection they shall be of those made to appear hideous.

SECTION 5.—A Prophet like Moses

43 And We gave Moses the Book after We had destroyed the former generations, clear arguments for men and a guidance and a mercy, that they may be mindful. 44 And thou wert not on the western side when We revealed to Moses the commandment, and thou wert not among the witnesses;[2] 45 But We raised up generations, and life

[1] Pharaoh mocks at the idea of the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and derisively commands one of his ministers to prepare bricks (such being the significance of *kindling a fire on dust*) and to erect a lofty building so that he may have a peep into the heavens to discover the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

[2] The repetition of the phrase *thou wert not* at such and such a place in this and the following two verses, is simply to lay stress upon the fulfilment of the prophecy, which is so clear that it should be thought that Moses was speaking of one whose presence at the time made him fully well known to him.

became prolonged to them ; and thou wert not dwelling among the people of Midian, reciting to them Our communications, but We were the senders.
46 And thou wert not on this side of the mountain when We called, but a mercy from thy Lord that thou mayest warn a people to whom no warner came before thee, that they may be mindful.[1]
47 And were it not that there should befall them a disaster for what their hands have sent before, then they should say : Our Lord ! why didst Thou not send to us an apostle so that we should have followed Thy communications and been of the believers !
48 But (now) when the truth has come to them from Us, they say : Why is he not given the like of what was given to Moses ? What ! did they not disbelieve in what Moses was given before ? They say : Two enchantments backing up each other ; and they say : We are unbelievers in all.[2]
49 Say : Then bring some (other) book from God which is a better guide than both of them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful.[3]
50 But if they do not answer thee, then know that they only follow their low desires ; and who is more erring than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from God ? Surely God does not guide the unjust people.

SECTION 6.—Truth of Revelation

51 And for their sake We have made the Word to have many points of connection so that they may be

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[1] This verse throws light on the purpose of the foregoing verses : You were not there, but it was Divine mercy that put a prophecy into the mouth of Moses regarding you. This is made clear by the words *a mercy from thy Lord that thou mayest warn. . . .* The people to whom no warner had come before were the Arabs ; see 32 : 3, 36 : 6.

[2] The unbelievers did not adopt any one firm position against the Holy Prophet, and whenever one objection was shown to be erroneous, they took refuge in another. At the advent of the Prophet they said that he should have received a revelation like the revelation of Moses, but when the likeness was pointed out to them, and they were told that their fate was to be like the fate of the opponents of Moses, they are found saying that both, i.e. Moses and Muhammad, were deceivers who enchanted people by their eloquence, the one helping the other, and therefore they believed neither in the one nor in the other.

[3] This statement only draws attention to the fact that the revelation granted to Moses and that granted to the Holy Prophet both occupy a higher position than any other revelation. And this is in fact true, for among all the sacred books of the world the Bible occupies a position second only to the Holy Quran.

mindful.[1] 52 Those whom We gave the Book before it believe in it. 53 And when it is recited to them, they say: We believe in it; it is the truth from our Lord; we were indeed before this submitting ones. 54 These shall be granted their reward twice, because they are steadfast and they repel evil with good and spend out of what We have given them. 55 And when they hear idle talk they turn aside from it and say: We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds; peace be on you, we do not desire the ignorant. 56 Thou canst not guide whom thou lovest, but God guides whom He pleases, and He knows best the followers of the right way. 57 And they say: If we follow the guidance with thee, we shall be carried off from our country. What! have We not settled them in a safe sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn? A sustenance from Us; but most of them do not know.[2] 58 And how many a town have We destroyed which exulted in its means of subsistence; so these are their abodes; they have not been dwelt in after them except a little, and We are the inheritors. 59 And thy Lord never destroyed the towns until He raised in their metropolis an apostle, reciting to them Our communications, and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust. 60 And whatever things you have been given are only a provision of this world's life and its adornment, and whatever is with God is better and more lasting; do you not understand?

SECTION 7.—Opponents shall be brought low

61 Is he to whom We have promised a goodly promise which he shall meet with like him whom We have pro-

[1] What is implied here is that the word of God, as contained in the Quran, is made to have many points of connection with previous revelation, so that it may be the easier for them to be reminded of its truth. Even if they did not believe in previous revelation, the broad points of likeness in the principles of two different prophets appearing at such a distance of time from each other, among entirely different nations, and under totally different circumstances, and the fulfilment in one of the prophecies uttered by the other, afford conclusive evidence of the truth of them both.

[2] The verse speaks first of the unfounded fears of those who thought that the weakness of the Muslims would result in the seizure, death, or expulsion of those who accepted the faith of Islam. In reply they are told that the prophecies which declare Mecca to be a safe and sacred territory, to which people will flock in all ages, must come to fulfilment.

vided with the provisions of this world's life, then on the
day of resurrection he shall be of those who are brought
up (for punishment). 62 And on the day when He will
call them and say: Where are those whom you deemed
to be My associates? 63 Those against whom the word
has proved true will say: Our Lord! these are they whom
we caused to err: we caused them to err as we ourselves
did err; to Thee we declare ourselves to be clear (of
them); they never served us. 64 And it will be said:
Call your associate-gods. So they will call upon them,
but they will not answer them, and they shall see the
chastisement; would that they had followed the right
way! 65 And on the day when He shall call them and
say: What was the answer you gave to the apostles?
66 Then the pleas shall become obscure to them on that
day, and they shall not ask each other. 67 But as to
him who repents and believes and does good, maybe he
will be among the successful. 68 And thy Lord creates
and chooses whom He pleases; to choose is not theirs;
glory be to God, and exalted be He above what they set
up (with Him). 69 And thy Lord knows what their
breasts conceal and what they manifest. 70 And He is
God, there is no god but He! All praise is due to Him
in this (world) and the hereafter, and His is the judgment,
and to Him you shall be brought back. 71 Say: Tell
me, if God were to make the night to continue incessantly
on you till the day of resurrection, who is the god besides
God that could bring you light? Do you not hear?
72 Say: Tell me, if God were to make the day to con-
tinue incessantly on you till the day of resurrection, who
is the god besides God that could bring you the night
in which you take rest? Do you not see? 73 And out
of His mercy He has made for you the night and the day,
that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His
grace, and that you may give thanks. 74 And on the
day when He shall call them and say: Where are those
whom you deemed to be My associates? 75 And We
will draw forth from among every nation a witness and
say, Bring your proof; then shall they know that the
truth is God's, and that which they forged shall depart
from them.

SECTION 8.—**Korah**

76 Korah was of the people of Moses, but he rebelled against them, and We had given him of the treasures, so much so that his hoards of wealth would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of great strength. When his people said to him: Do not exult, for God does not love the exultant:[1] 77 And seek the future abode by means of what God has given thee and do not neglect thy portion of this world, and do good (to others) as God has done good to thee, and do not seek to make mischief in the land, for God does not love the mischief-makers. 78 He said: I have been given this only on account of the knowledge I have. Did he not know that God had destroyed before him of the generations those who were mightier in strength than he and had amassed more (wealth)? And the guilty shall not be asked about their sins.[2] 79 So he went forth to his people in his finery. Those who desired this world's life said: O would that we had the like of what Korah is given; for he is possessed of mighty good fortune. 80 And those who were given the knowledge said: Woe to you! God's reward is better for him who believes and does good, and none is made to receive this except the patient. 81 Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode;[3] so he had no body of helpers to assist him against God, nor was he of those who can defend themselves. 82 And those who yearned for his place only the day before began to say: Ah! (know) that God amplifies and straitens the means of subsistence for whom He pleases of His servants; had not God been gracious to us, He would surely have abased us; ah! (know) that the ungrateful are never successful.

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[1] The story of Korah or Qarun, his revolt against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, and his being swallowed up by the earth, is given in Num. 16. The only addition of any importance to the story as given in the Quran is the mention of his wealth, a fact noticed in Rabbinical literature (*Jewish En.*), according to which the fabulous renown of his wealth is so great that the keys of his treasures formed a load for three hundred mules.

[2] I.e. no explanation will be called for, as it will be a day of the manifestation of the consequences of deeds. Compare 55: 38–40.

[3] The meaning conveyed is that he perished. *Khasf* also signifies *abasing, humbling*, or *lowering* another. See next verse.

SECTION 9.—The Prophet's Flight and Return

83 (As for) that future abode, We assign it to those who
have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor to make
mischief; and the good end is for the righteous. 84 Who-
ever brings good, he shall have better than it, and whoever
brings evil, those who do evil shall not be rewarded (for)
aught except what they did. 85 He who has made the
Quran binding on thee will certainly bring thee back to
the destination.[1] Say: My Lord knows best him who
has brought the guidance and him who is in manifest
error. 86 And thou didst not expect that the Book would
be inspired to thee, but it is a mercy from thy Lord, there-
fore be not a backer up of the unbelievers. 87 And let
them not turn thee aside from the communications of God
after they have been revealed to thee, and call (men)
to thy Lord and be not of the polytheists. 88 And call
not with God any other god; there is no god but He;
every thing is perishable but He; His is the judgment, and
to Him you shall be brought back.

CHAPTER 29

AL-'ANKABŪT: THE SPIDER

(*Mecca—7 sections; 69 verses*)

THIS chapter is entitled *The Spider* from the fact that false, idolatrous, and polytheistic beliefs are here compared to a spider's web. This chapter and the three following form another group of Meccan revelation, each being headed by the letters *alif, lám, mím*. The present chapter deals chiefly with the persecutions of the Muslims and the trials which they underwent, but the common theme of this group, as made clear in the chapter that follows, is that a great nation was about to be raised from the dead land of Arabia. The date of their revelation can definitely be ascribed to the fifth or sixth year of the Holy Prophet's ministry on account of the prophecy contained in the next chapter.

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[1] The word *ma'ád* means *the ultimate place of one's returning*, and here it has been taken to mean *Mecca*, because the pilgrims return to it again and again; see 2:125, where the Kaba is called "a resort for men." Thus there is a clear prophecy here that the Prophet shall have to fly from Mecca and that he shall be brought back there, evidently as a conqueror. According to some this verse was revealed on the Prophet's departure from Mecca, i.e. on his way to Medina.

The last chapter predicted in plain words a triumphal return of the Holy Prophet to Mecca, thus indicating the triumph of Islam. Here we are told that the great object of the triumph of truth has never been achieved except by suffering sore afflictions and severe trials in its cause. Hence trials and persecutions were necessary Starting thus, there is a reference to the persecution of children by their very parents, and the converts to Islam are told that they must yield to their parents in all other matters, but must resolutely reject false doctrines. The second, third, and fourth sections make brief references to the histories of Noah, Abraham, Lot, and other prophets, showing how the righteous had always to undergo trials and how they were subjected to persecutions, but false beliefs had no basis and had always been swept away by truth. At the end of the fourth section, false beliefs are compared to a spider's web, thus illustrating their extreme frailty. The fifth section refers to the purifying effect of the Quran, and the repeated demand for more signs is met with the simple answer that the holy word of God was in itself a sufficiently clear sign, because it wrought a transformation in the lives of those who followed it. The sixth section warns the unbelievers of the fate in store for them and of the consequences of their tyrannical persecutions of the Muslims; it also comforts the latter by stating that their sufferings will soon be changed into a state of happiness. The seventh section shows that God, who deals mercifully even with the unbelievers, will not allow the exertions of the faithful in the cause of truth to remain unfruitful.

SECTION 1.—**Trials purify**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower. 2 Do men think that
they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not
be tried? [1] 3 And certainly We tried those before them,
so God will surely know those who are true and He will
surely know the liars. 4 Or do they who work evil think
that they will escape Us? Evil is it that they judge!
5 Whoever hopes to meet God, the doom appointed by
God will then surely come; and He is the Hearing, the
Knowing. 6 And whoever strives hard, he strives only
for his own soul; for God is Self-sufficient, above (need of)
the worlds. 7 And those who believe and do good, We
will do away their evil deeds and We will reward them
the best of what they did. 8 And We have enjoined on
man goodness to his parents, and if they contend with
thee that thou shouldst associate (others) with Me, of

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[1] The reference is to the persecutions of the believers by the unbelievers at Mecca.

which thou hast no knowledge, do not obey them;[1] to
Me is your return, so I will inform you of what you did.
9 And those who believe and do good, We will cause them
to enter among the good. 10 And among men is he who
says: We believe in God; but when he is persecuted
in (the way of) God he thinks the persecution of men to be
as the chastisement of God;[2] and if there come assistance
from thy Lord, they would say: We were with you.
What! is not God the best knower of what is in the breasts
of mankind? 11 And God will certainly know those
who believe, and He will certainly know the hypocrites.
12 And those who disbelieve say to those who believe:
Follow our path and we will bear your wrongs. And
never shall they be the bearers of any of their wrongs;
surely they are liars. 13 And they shall carry their own
burdens, and other burdens with their own burdens, and
they shall certainly be questioned on the resurrection day
as to what they forged.

SECTION 2.—**Noah and Abraham**

14 And We sent Noah to his people, so he remained among
them a thousand years save fifty years.[3] And the deluge
overtook them, while they were unjust. 15 So We de-
livered him and the inmates of the ark, and made it a
sign to the nations. 16 And (We sent) Abraham when
he said to his people: Serve God and be careful of (your
duty to) Him; this is best for you, if you know. 17 You
only worship idols besides God and you create a lie. They
whom you serve besides God do not control for you any
sustenance, therefore seek sustenance from God and serve
Him and be grateful to Him; to Him you shall be brought

[1] This verse, while signifying the importance of obedience to parents, at the same time warns against attaching over-importance to even the filial duty. It shows that when even an important duty clashes with a still higher one, the former is to be sacrificed to the latter.

[2] The meaning is that those who are weak in faith consider the persecution by the unbelievers which was necessary to strengthen and purify their faith as if it were a chastisement from God for their change of faith.

[3] It is not improbable that the span of man's life may have been greater in his earlier history than at present, and Noah may have attained an extraordinary age among his compatriots. But there are indications that the reference here is to the abiding for 950 years of the law preached by Noah, his place being then taken by Abraham, who is for this reason mentioned immediately after Noah.

back. 18 And if you reject (the truth), nations before you did indeed reject (the truth); and nothing is incumbent on the Apostle but a plain delivering (of the message). 19 What! do they not consider how God originates the creation, then reproduces it? Surely that is easy to God.[1] 20 Say: Travel in the earth and see how He makes the first creation, then God creates the latter creation; surely God has power over all things. 21 He chastises whom He pleases and has mercy on whom He pleases, and to Him you shall be turned back. 22 And you shall not escape in the earth nor in the heaven, and you have neither a protector nor a helper besides God.

SECTION 3.—**Abraham and Lot**

23 And those who disbelieve in the communications of God and His meeting despair of My mercy, and these it is that shall have a painful chastisement. 24 So naught was the answer of his people except that they said: Slay him or burn him; but God delivered him from the fire;[2] surely there are signs in this for a people who believe. 25 And he said: You have only taken for yourselves idols besides God by way of friendship between you in this world's life, then on the resurrection day some of you shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others, and your abode is the fire, and you shall not have any helpers. 26 And Lot believed in him, and he said: I am fleeing to my Lord, for He is the Mighty, the Wise.[3] 27 And We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and caused the prophethood and the book to remain in his seed, and We gave him his reward in this world, and in the hereafter he will surely

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[1] The law of creation and destruction of things, which is constantly working in nature finds an expression in the lives of nations: a nation is brought into existence, then it is swept away and a new nation raised in its stead. It is to this law that the verse refers as a warning to the idolatrous Meccans that the time had now come when their place should be taken by another nation. This is made clearer in the verses that follow.

[2] As in 21 : 69, so here, it is not stated that Abraham was actually cast into the fire. On the other hand, the plan was either to *slay* or to ***burn*** him.

[3] The words ***I am fleeing to my Lord*** indicate his flight to another country whither he was commanded to flee by his Lord. This is more clearly stated in 19 : 49. His flight to another country thus saved Abraham from the fire.

be among the good. 28 And (We sent) Lot when he said to his people: You are guilty of an indecency which none of the nations has ever done before you: 29 What! do you come to the males and commit robbery on the highway, and you commit evil deeds in your assemblies? But nothing was the answer of his people except that they said: Bring on us God's chastisement, if thou art one of the truthful. 30 He said: My Lord! help me against the mischievous people.

SECTION 4.—**Lot and other Prophets**

31 And when Our messengers came to Abraham with good news, they said: We are going to destroy the people of this town, for its people are unjust. 32 He said: In it is Lot. They said: We know well who is in it; we shall deliver him and his followers, except his wife; she shall be of those who remain behind. 33 And when Our messengers came to Lot he was grieved on account of them, and he was lacking of strength in their affair; and they said: Fear not, nor grieve; we will deliver thee and thy followers, except thy wife; she shall be of those who remain behind: 34 We will cause to come down upon the people of this town a punishment from heaven, because they transgressed. 35 And certainly We have left a clear sign of it for a people who understand.[1] 36 And to Midian (We sent) their brother Shuaib, so he said: O my people! serve God and fear the latter day, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief. 37 But they rejected him, so a severe earthquake overtook them, and they became motionless bodies in their abode. 38 And (We destroyed) Ad and Samood, and from their dwellings (this) is clear to you indeed; and the devil made their deeds fairseeming to them, so he kept them back from the path, though they were endowed with perceptive faculties of the mind; 39 And (We destroyed) Korah and Pharaoh and Haman; and Moses came to them with clear arguments, but they behaved haughtily, in the land; yet they could not outstrip (Us). 40 So each We punished for his sin; and of them was he on whom We sent down a

[1] Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities destroyed, are in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, on the road from Arabia, as is said in 15 : 76.

violent storm, and of them was he whom the rumbling overtook, and of them was he whom We made to be swallowed up by the earth, and of them was he whom We drowned; and it did not beseem God that He should be unjust to them, but they were unjust to their own souls.
41 The parable of those who take guardians besides God is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house; and surely the frailest of houses is the spider's house—did they but know. 42 God knows whatever thing they call upon besides Him; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.
43 And these parables We set forth for men, and none understand them but the learned. 44 God created the heavens and the earth with truth; surely there is a sign in this for the believers.

PART XXI

SECTION 5.—The Quran purifies

45 Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book and keep up prayer; for prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil, and the remembrance of God is certainly the greatest, and God knows what you do.[1]
46 And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, save those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One and to Him do we submit.[2] 47 And thus have We revealed the Book to thee; so those whom We

[1] This verse lays down the right principle for getting rid of the bondage of sin in the words *the remembrance of God is the greatest*, i.e. the most powerful and effective restraint upon sin. It is a living belief in Divine power, knowledge, and goodness that restrains man from walking in the ways of His displeasure, and this is what is implied in the remembrance of God. A sure and certain knowledge that every evil action leads to an evil consequence, that there is a Supreme Being Who knows what is hid from human eye and Whose moral law is effective where the moral force of society altogether fails, that He is the source of all goodness and it is through goodness that man can have communion with Him, are the only effective restraints upon evil. These are the principles wherein every fresh revelation inspires a living faith.

[2] That is the gist of the Islamic controversy: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is one. A Muslim's conception of God is the purest monotheism, and his conception of the Divine revelation is the broadest that can be entertained, recognizing as it does that Divine revelation is granted in all ages and to all nations.

have given the Book believe in it, and of these there are those who believe in it, and none deny Our communications except the unbelievers.
48 And thou didst not recite before it any book, nor didst thou transcribe one with thy right hand, for then could those who say untrue things have doubted.[1]
49 Nay! these are clear communications in the breasts of those who are granted knowledge; and none deny Our communications except the unjust.
50 And they say: Why are not signs sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: The signs are only with God, and I am only a plain warner.
51 Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to thee the Book which is recited to them? Surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe.

SECTION 6.—A Warning and a Comfort

52 Say: God is sufficient as a witness between me and you; He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. And those who believe in the falsehood and disbelieve in God, these it is that are the losers.
53 And they ask thee to hasten on the chastisement; and had not a term been appointed, the chastisement would already have come to them; and certainly it will come to them all of a sudden while they do not perceive.
54 They ask thee to hasten on the chastisement, and surely hell encompasses the unbelievers;[2]
55 On the day when the chastisement shall cover them from above them, and from beneath their feet; and He shall say: Taste what you did.
56 O my servants who believe! My earth is vast, therefore Me alone should you serve.[3]
57 Every soul must taste

[1] The broad principles of religion and the beautiful moral and spiritual truths which find expression in the Quran could not have been collected, if such a collection by human exertion were possible, except by one who had knowledge of all the previous scriptures; but, to say nothing of all the scriptures, the Holy Prophet had not read even a single book. What might have been said against a prophet like Jesus, that he had read the previous scriptures and collected some beautiful truths from them, could not be said against the Holy Prophet, for the latter could neither read nor write, and his inability to do either is thus a confirmation of his truth.

[2] This is said in reference to the all-encompassing nature of the punishment which will not leave them a way to escape. The next verse makes it clear.

[3] This is to comfort the Muslims against the severe persecutions by their enemies. If they are persecuted at Mecca, they shall find a refuge elsewhere, where they shall not find such hindrances. Thus a flight to another place is clearly foretold here.

of death, then to Us you shall be brought back. 58 And
those who believe and do good, We will certainly give
them abode in the high places in gardens in which rivers
flow, abiding therein ; how good the reward of the workers :
59 Those who are patient, and on their Lord do they rely.
60 And how many a living creature that does not carry
its sustenance ; God sustains it and yourselves ; and
He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 61 And if thou ask
them, Who created the heavens and the earth and made
the sun and the moon subservient, they will say, God.
Whence are they then turned away ? 62 God makes
abundant the means of subsistence for whom He pleases
of His servants, and straitens them for whom (He pleases) ;
surely God is Cognizant of all things. 63 And if thou
ask them, Who is it that sends down water from the
clouds, then gives life to the earth with it after its death,
they will say, God. Say : All praise is due to God. Nay,
most of them do not understand.

SECTION 7.—**Triumph of the Faithful**

64 And this life of the world is nothing but a sport and
a play ; and as for the next abode, that surely is the
life—did they but know ! 65 So when they ride in the
ships they call upon God, being sincerely obedient to
Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo ! they
set up others (with Him) ; 66 That they may be ungrateful
for what We have given them, and that they may enjoy ;
but they shall soon know. 67 Do they not see that We
have made a sacred territory secure, while men are carried
off by force from around them ? [1] Will they still believe
in the falsehood and disbelieve in the grace of God ?
68 And who is more unjust than one who forges a lie
against God, or gives the lie to the truth when it has come
to him ? Will not in hell be the abode of the unbelievers ?
69 And those who strive hard for Us, We will certainly
guide them in Our ways ; and God is surely with the doers
of good.

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[1] The *haram* includes the city of Mecca and several miles of territory around it. War is forbidden within these limits. The reference in *men* being *carried off by force* is to the great insecurity of life and property in Arabia, while no one dare violate the sacredness of Mecca.

CHAPTER 30

AR-RŪM: THE ROMANS

(Mecca—6 sections; 60 verses)

THE chapter receives its name from the important prophecy regarding the victory of the Romans over the Persians, who, at the time of the utterance of this prophecy, had overrun the whole of the Roman Empire and were almost knocking at the gates of Constantinople. But the importance of this chapter does not lie in this prophecy alone, but in another and grander declared along with it. This is the prophecy of the victory of the Muslims over their mighty foe, the Quraish; a circumstance which, in the light of all events on which human inference could be based, was as clear an impossibility as ever existed in the world. This prophecy saw its fulfilment in the battle of Badr, which took place in the same year as the victory of the Romans over the Persians. Indeed, the one thing common to this group of the four Meccan chapters, 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd, which begin with *alif, lām, mīm*, is the grand and majestic utterance that a great nation was about to be raised from the dead land of Arabia, and this prophecy, though clearly mentioned in all these chapters, finds the clearest expression here.

The chapter opens with a reference to the Roman vanquishment, and immediately declares a prophecy of Rome's triumph over her foe, and adds a prophecy of a great Muslim victory over their oppressors at the same time. The second section speaks of the two parties of believers and unbelievers, stating that their respective conditions will soon be reversed, the Muslims getting the upper hand. The third section refers to the manifestation of Divine power in nature as an indication that a manifestation of the same power will bring about the triumph of Islam. The fourth section shows that the spiritual triumph of Islam is a certainty, because, responding as it does to human nature and answering all the requisites of the natural religion of man, it must ultimately appeal to man's nature and be accepted universally. This triumph, it is stated, in the next section, was to be accomplished by a great and wonderful transformation in Arabia. Those who doubted the accomplishment of such a revolution, on account of the mighty opposition to the progress of Islam, are told in the concluding section that the overthrow of opposition was absolutely certain.

SECTION 1.—Two Wonderful Prophecies

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower. 2 The Romans are
vanquished 3 In a near land, and they, after being
vanquished, shall overcome,[1] 4 Within a few years. God's

[1] The struggle between Persia and the Roman Empire had existed for a long time. The great struggle, in which Persia was victorious, began in 602 of the Christian era, when Chosroes II of Persia began war with

is the command before and after; and on that day the believers shall rejoice, 5 With the help of God; He helps whom He pleases; and He is the Mighty, the Merciful; 6 (This is) God's promise! God will not fail His promise, but most people do not know. 7 They know the outward of this world's life, and of the hereafter they are absolutely heedless. 8 Do they not reflect within themselves (that) God did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with truth, and (for) an appointed term? And surely most of the people are deniers of the meeting of their Lord. 9 Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than these in prowess, and dug up the earth, and built on it in greater abundance than these have built on it, and there came to them their apostles with clear arguments; so it was not beseeming for God

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Rome to avenge the death of Maurice, who was murdered by Phocas. "His armies plundered Syria and Asia Minor, and in 608 advanced to Chalcedon. In 613 and 614 Damascus and Jerusalem were taken by the general Shahabaraz, and the Holy Cross was carried away in triumph. Soon after, even Egypt was conquered. The Romans could offer but little resistance, as they were torn by internal dissensions and pressed by the Avars and Slavs" (*En. Br.*, Art. Chosroes II). When the news of this conquest reached Mecca, the Quraish were jubilant, as their sympathies were with the fire-worshipping Persians more than with the Christians, who, being the followers of the scriptures, were classed by them with the Muslims. One reason for their joy seems to have been founded on the belief that this defeat of the Christians foreboded vanquishment for the Muslims, to whom the Quran had repeatedly prophesied success and triumph over themselves. It was in the year 615 or 616 that the Quran announced this revelation, containing two different prophecies, one about the vanquishment of the victorious Persians, who had reached the very gates of Constantinople, by the Romans, who were by this time quite exhausted, and the other about the vanquishment of the powerful Meccans by the handful of persecuted Muslims (vv. 4, 5).

As to the fulfilment of these two prophecies, which utterly turned the tables against the powerful Persian Empire and the mighty opponents of the helpless and homeless Muslims in the short period of nine years, that being the time-limit given in the prophecy (the word *bid'un* denoting, according to all authorities, a period from three to nine or ten years), one need only cast a glance at history in and after the year 624. "In 624 he (Heraclius) advanced into northern Media, where he destroyed the great fire-temple of Goudzak" (*En. Br.*, Art. Chosroes II).

In the same year, 313 Muslims, many of whom were raw, inexperienced youths without any arms, routed a strong force of about a thousand of the Quraish warriors, killing all the leaders and dealing a death-blow to the power of the enemy. The successes of the Muslim army, on the one hand, and of the Romans on the other, continued until the Quraish were utterly crushed by the conquest of Mecca in 630, while "the Persian Empire, from the apparent greatness which it had reached ten years ago, sank into hopeless anarchy" (*En. Br.*).

that He should deal with them unjustly, but they dealt
unjustly with their own souls. 10 Then evil was the end
of those who did evil, because they rejected the communica-
tions of God and used to mock them.

SECTION 2.—**The Two Parties**

11 God originates the creation, then reproduces it, then
to Him you shall be brought back. 12 And at the time
when the hour shall come, the guilty shall be in despair.
13 And they shall not have any intercessors from among
their associate-gods, and they shall be deniers of their
associate-gods. 14 And at the time when the hour shall
come, at that time they shall become separated one from
the other. 15 Then as to those who believed and did
good, they shall be made happy in a garden. 16 And as
to those who disbelieved and rejected Our communica-
tions and the meeting of the hereafter, these shall be
brought over to the chastisement. 17 So glory be to God
when you enter upon the time of the evening and when you
enter upon the time of the morning, 18 And to Him belongs
praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon,
and when you are at midday. 19 He brings forth the
living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the
living, and gives life to the earth after its death, and thus
shall you be brought forth.

SECTION 3.—**Signs of the Power of God**

20 And one of His signs is that He created you from
dust, then lo! you are mortals (who) scatter. 21 And
one of His signs is that He created mates for you from
yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them, and
He put between you love and compassion; surely there
are signs in this for a people who reflect. 22 And one
of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth
and the diversity of your tongues and colours; surely
there are signs in this for the learned. 23 And one of His
signs is your sleeping and your seeking of His grace by
night and (by) day; surely there are signs in this for a
people who would hear. 24 And one of His signs is that
He shows you the lightning for fear and for hope, and
sends down water from the cloud, then gives life therewith

to the earth after its death; surely there are signs in this for a people who understand. 25 And one of His signs is that the heaven and the earth subsist by His command, then when He calls you with a (single) call from out the earth, lo! you come forth. 26 And His is whosoever is in the heavens and the earth: all are obedient to Him. 27 And He it is Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and it is easy to Him; and His are the most exalted attributes in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

SECTION 4.—Natural Religion of Man

28 He sets forth to you a parable relating to yourselves: Have you among those whom your right hands possess partners in what We have given you for sustenance, so that with respect to it you are alike—you fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We make the communications distinct for a people who understand. 29 Nay! those who are unjust follow their low desires without any knowledge; so who can guide him whom God leaves in error? And they shall have no helpers. 30 So set thy face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by God in which He has made men; there is no altering of God's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know [1]—31 Turning to Him, and be careful of (your duty to) Him, and keep up prayer and be not of the polytheists, 32 Of those who divided their religion and became parties, every sect rejoicing in what they had with them. 33 And when harm afflicts men, they call upon their Lord, turning to Him, and when He makes them taste of mercy from Him, lo! some of them begin to set up gods with their Lord, 34 That they may be ungrateful for what We have given them; but enjoy yourselves (for a while), for you shall soon come to know.

[1] Islam according to this verse is the natural religion of man, or a religion to the truth of which human nature bears testimony. Its fundamental principles, the Unity and all-comprehensive providence of God, the universality of Divine revelation, and the accountability for all actions, in a life after death, are recognized by all religions and all nations, and their universal acceptance is a clear evidence that it is the very nature of man that bears testimony to their truth. Islam removes all limitations upon these three fundamental doctrines of the religion of humanity, and gives them as wide a significance as humanity itself.

35 Or, have We sent down upon them an authority so that
it speaks of that which they set up with Him? 36 And
when We make people taste of mercy they rejoice in it,
and if an evil befall them for what their hands have already
wrought, lo! they are in despair. 37 Do they not see
that God makes ample provision for whom He pleases,
and straitens? Surely there are signs in this for a people
who believe. 38 And give to the near of kin his due, and
to the needy and the wayfarer; this is best for those who
desire God's pleasure, and these it is who are successful.
39 And whatever you lay out at usury, so that it may
increase in the property of men, it shall not increase with
God; and whatever you give in charity, desiring God's
pleasure—these it is that shall get manifold. 40 God is
He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He
causes you to die, then brings you to life. Is there any
of your associate-gods who does aught of it? Glory be
to Him, and exalted be He above what they set up (with
Him).

SECTION 5.—**A Transformation**

41 Corruption appeared in the land and the sea on
account of what the hands of men wrought,[1] that He may
make them taste a part of that which they have done, so
that they may turn (to God). 42 Say: Travel in the
land, and see how was the end of those before; most
of them were polytheists. 43 And set thyself upright
to the right course before there comes from God the day
which cannot be averted; on that day they shall be
separated. 44 Whoever disbelieves, on him is his dis-
belief; and whoever does good, they prepare (good)
for their own souls, 45 That He may reward those who
believe and do good out of His grace; surely He does not

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[1] Before the advent of the Holy Prophet corruption prevailed in all countries of the world. Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism had long ceased to have any healthy effect on the lives of their votaries, and the followers of these religions had not only ceased to practise virtue, but, worst of all, they had begun to look upon vice as virtue, and many of them attributed indecent and immoral practices to their sages and their gods. Christianity, which was the youngest of the then religions of the world, had lost all its purity. "The Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt," is Muir's verdict. Such widespread corruption had never previously existed in the world's history.

love the unbelievers. 46 And one of His signs is that
He sends forth the winds bearing good news, and that
He may make you taste of His mercy, and that the ships
may run by His command, and that you may seek of His
grace and that you may be grateful. 47 And We sent
before thee apostles to their people, so they came to them
with clear arguments, then We gave the punishment to
those who were guilty; and helping the believers is ever
incumbent on Us. 48 God is He Who sends forth the winds
so they raise a cloud, then He spreads it forth in the sky
as He pleases, and He breaks it up so that you see the
rain coming forth from inside it; and when He causes
it to fall upon whom He pleases of His servants, lo! they
are joyful, 49 Though they were before this, before it
was sent down upon them, confounded in sure despair.
50 Look then at the signs of God's mercy, how He gives
life to the earth after its death. Surely He is the quickener
of the dead; and He has power over all things. 51 And
if We send a wind and they see it to be yellow, they would
after that continue to disbelieve.[1] 52 Thou canst not
make the dead to hear and thou canst not make the deaf
to hear the call, when they turn back retreating. 53 Nor
canst thou lead away the blind out of their error. Thou
canst not make to hear any but those who believe in Our
communications, so they are Muslims.

SECTION 6.—**Overthrow of Opposition**

54 God is He Who created you from a state of weakness,
then He gave strength after weakness, then ordained
weakness and hoary hair after strength; He creates what
He pleases, and He is the Knowing, the Powerful. 55 And
at the time when the hour shall come, the guilty shall swear
(that) they did not tarry but an hour; thus are they ever
turned away. 56 And those who are given knowledge
and faith will say: Certainly you tarried according to

[1] *It*, in this verse, refers to *the seed-produce*, which is meant by the expression "gives life to the earth" in the previous verse; the meaning is, the seed-produce may be rendered yellow or caused to wither away by a blast of the wind. The allusion is to the disasters which would strike a blow at the unbelievers' plans. It also refers to their persistence in unbelief, in spite of the afflictions which they will experience, such as the great famine, or the evident signs of the weakening of their power, such as they saw at Badr and on other fields of battle.

the ordinance of God till the day of resurrection, so this
is the day of resurrection, but you did not know. 57 But
on that day their excuse shall not profit those who were
unjust, nor shall they be regarded with goodwill. 58 And
We have set forth for men every kind of parable in this
Quran; and if thou shouldst bring them a communica-
tion, those who disbelieve would say: You are naught
but false claimants. 59 Thus does God set a seal on the
hearts of those who do not know. 60 Therefore be
patient; for the promise of God is true, and let not those
who have no certainty hold thee in light estimation.

CHAPTER 31

LUQMAN

(*Mecca*—4 *sections*; 34 *verses*)

THE name of this chapter is taken from that of the sage to whose story it refers. Luqman was an Ethiopian, and his mention here testifies to the breadth of the fundamental principles of Islam alluded to in the last chapter. The aim of this chapter is, like its sister chapters, to ensure the success of the believers.

The chapter consists only of four sections. The first asserts in unmistakable terms the success of the Muslims; the second refers to the advice of Luqman to his son, which was now meant for the Muslims; the third speaks of the greatness of Divine power, which could bring about such an impossible thing as the triumph of the Muslims over their enemies; and the fourth foretells the doom of the mighty opponents.

SECTION 1.—Success of Believers

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower. 2 These are verses of
the Book of wisdom, 3 A guidance and a mercy for the
doers of good, 4 Those who keep up prayer and pay
the poor-rate and they are certain of the hereafter.
5 These are on a guidance from their Lord, and these are
they who are successful. 6 And of men is he who takes
instead frivolous discourse to lead astray from God's
path without knowledge and to take it for a mockery;
these shall have an abasing chastisement. 7 And when
Our communications are recited to him, he turns back
proudly, as if he had not heard them, as though in his

ears were a heaviness, so announce to him a painful chastisement. 8 Those who believe and do good shall have gardens of bliss, 9 Abiding in them; the promise of God, (a) true (promise), and He is the Mighty, the Wise. 10 He created the heavens without pillars that you can see, and put mountains upon the earth lest it might convulse with you, and He spread in it animals of every kind; and We sent down water from the cloud, then caused to grow therein (vegetation) of every noble kind. 11 This is God's creation, but show me what those besides Him have created. Nay, the unjust are in manifest error.

SECTION 2.—Luqman

12 And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman,[1] saying: Be grateful to God. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely God is Self-sufficient, Praised. 13 And when Luqman said to his son while he admonished him: O my son! do not set up aught with God; for setting up gods (with God) is a grievous iniquity—14 And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents—his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings and his weaning takes two years—saying: Be grateful to Me and to both thy parents; to Me is the eventual coming. 15 And if they contend with thee that thou shouldst associate with Me what thou hast no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did—16 O my son! even if it is the weight of the grain of a mustard-seed, though it is in (the heart of) a rock, or (high above) in the heaven or (deep down) in the earth, God will bring it (to light); for God is Knower of subtilties, Aware: 17 O my son! keep up prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and bear patiently that which befalls thee; this is one of the affairs earnestly enjoined: 18 And do not turn thy face away from people in contempt, nor go about

[1] From what is stated of Luqman, he seems to have been an Ethiopian, and it is a characteristic of the Quran that it accepts prophets of all nationalities. It is very probable that the Greek Æsop is a corruption of Ethiopian and is identical with Luqman.

in the land exulting overmuch; for God does not love any self-conceited boaster: 19 And pursue the right course in thy going about and lower thy voice, for the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses.[1]

SECTION 3.—**Divine Power**

20 Do you not see that God has made what is in the heavens and what is in the earth subservient to you, and made complete to you His favours outwardly and inwardly? And among men is he who disputes in respect of God without having any knowledge, or guidance, or a book giving light. 21 And when it is said to them, Follow what God has revealed, they say: Nay, we follow that on which we found our fathers. What! though the devil calls them to the chastisement of the burning fire! 22 And whoever submits himself wholly to God and he is the doer of good (to others), he indeed has taken hold of the firmest thing upon which one can lay hold; and God's is the end of affairs. 23 And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve thee; to Us is their return, then will We inform them of what they did; for God is the Knower of what is in the breasts. 24 We give them to enjoy a little, then will We drive them to a severe chastisement. 25 And if thou ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth, they will say, God. Say: (All) praise is due to God; nay! most of them do not know. 26 What is in the heavens and the earth is God's; surely God is the Self-sufficient, the Praised. 27 And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of God would not come to an end; surely God is Mighty, Wise![2] 28 Your creation or your raising is nothing but as that of a single soul; surely God is Hearing, Seeing. 29 Dost thou not see that God makes the night

[1] Humility and meekness are taught in these verses, and the essence of the whole Sermon on the Mount is given here in a few words, to show that even an Ethiopian could preach the meekness and humility of which the most materially advanced nations of the day may well feel proud.

[2] It is noteworthy that a man who himself could not use the pen and who lived in a country where pen and ink were at any rate scarce, expresses such an idea of the abundance of pens and ink. The words contain an allusion to the vastness of the creation of God, every created thing being called a word of God; compare 18 : 109.

to enter into the day, and He makes the day to enter into
the night, and He has made the sun and the moon sub-
servient (to you); each pursues its course till an appointed
time; and that God is Aware of what you do? 30 This
is because God is the Truth, and that which they call
upon besides Him is the falsehood, and that God is the
High, the Great.

SECTION 4.—The Doom

31 Dost thou not see that the ships run on in the sea by
God's favour, that He may show you of His signs? Surely
there are signs in this for every patient endurer, grateful
one. 32 And when the waves come over them like cover-
ings, they call upon God, being sincere to Him in obedience,
but when He brings them safe to the land, some of them
follow the middle course; and none denies Our signs but
every perfidious, ungrateful one. 33 O people! guard
against (the punishment of) your Lord and dread the
day when a father shall not make any satisfaction for his
son, nor shall the child be the maker of any satisfaction
for his father. The promise of God is true, therefore let
not this world's life deceive you, nor let the arch-deceiver
deceive you in respect of God. 34 God is He with Whom
is the knowledge of the hour, and He sends down the rain
and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows
what he shall earn on the morrow; and no one knows
in what land he shall die; surely God is Knowing, Aware.

CHAPTER 32

AS-SAJDAH: THE ADORATION

(*Mecca—3 sections; 30 verses*)

As regards the subject-matter and the date of revelation, this chapter does not differ much from the three that precede it. This is the last of the group of four chapters beginning with the 29th, and contains as it were their sum and substance, embodying an allusion to the future history of Islam. The warning is given, the fate of the believers and the unbelievers is compared, and the judgment is announced, and to these three subjects the three sections of this chapter are devoted.

SECTION 1.—The Warning

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I am God, the best Knower. 2 The revelation of the
Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the Lord of the
worlds. 3 Or do they say: He has forged it? Nay!
it is the truth from thy Lord that thou mayest warn a
people to whom no warner has come before thee, that they
may follow the right direction.[1] 4 God is He Who created
the heavens and the earth and what is between them in
six periods, and He holds control on the throne; you have
not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor; will you
not mind? 5 He regulates the affair from the heaven
to the earth; then shall it ascend to Him in a day the
measure of which is a thousand years of what you count.[2]
6 This is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the
Mighty, the Merciful, 7 Who made good every thing that
He has created, and He began the creation of man from
dust. 8 Then He made his progeny of an extract, of
water held in light estimation. 9 Then He made him
complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made
for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it
that you give thanks.[3] 10 And they say: What! when
we have become lost in the earth, shall we then be in a
new creation? Nay! they are disbelievers in the meeting
of their Lord. 11 Say: The angel of death who is given
charge of you shall cause you to die, then to your Lord
you shall be brought back.

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[1] Mecca had not seen a prophet before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who was the only prophet raised among the descendants of Ishmael.

[2] There seems to be a hint here that the *amr* (translated here as *affair*, but which also means *commandment*, and signifies the kingdom of God as represented by Islam) will be first established firmly on earth, and then it will receive a set-back extending over a period of a thousand years. During the first three centuries of its rise Islam continued to advance while retaining its pristine purity, but after that there has generally been either a stationary condition or retrogression, while the purity of its doctrine has also been affected by foreign influence. The limitation of the period of set-back to a thousand years shows that it will after that again attain to supremacy.

[3] This shows that the Divine spirit is breathed into every man. Thus every man is a spirit from God and His word as well. But it should be noted that the spirit is not the animal soul; it is rather the discretion with which man is endowed, or the conscience which enables man to distinguish good from evil.

SECTION 2.—**Believers and Unbelievers**

12 And couldst thou but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: Our Lord! we have seen and we have heard; send us back, we will do good; (now) we are certain. 13 And if We had pleased We would have given to every soul its guidance, but the word (which had gone forth) from Me was just: I will fill hell with the jinn and men together. 14 So taste, because you neglected the meeting of this day of yours; We forsake you; and taste the abiding chastisement for what you did. 15 Only they believe in Our communications who, when they are reminded of them, fall down making obeisance and celebrate the praise of their Lord, and they are not proud. 16 Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend out of what We have given them. 17 So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did.[1] 18 Is he who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal. 19 As for those who believe and do good, the gardens are their abiding-place; an entertainment for what they did. 20 And as for those who transgress, their abode is the fire; whenever they desire to go forth from it, they shall be brought back into it, and it will be said to them: Taste the chastisement of the fire which you called a lie. 21 And certainly We will make them taste of the nearer chastisement before the greater chastisement, that haply they may turn.[2] 22 And who is more unjust than he who is reminded of the communications of his Lord, then he turns away from them? We will inflict retribution on the guilty.

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[1] This is a true description of what the blessings of paradise are: *No soul knows what is hidden for them.* These blessings are hidden from the physical eye of man, and therefore their description in words which convey to the mind an idea of the blessings of this life is metaphorical. Words cannot reveal to us the real nature of those blessings. The Holy Prophet's own comment on these words shows the truth of this statement, for he is reported to have said: "God says: I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and what the heart of man has not conceived."

[2] By the *nearer* chastisement is meant the earthly punishment which might serve as a warning against the greater punishment of the hereafter.

SECTION 3.—The Judgment

23 And We gave the Book to Moses, so be not in doubt
concerning the receiving of it, and We made it a guide for
the children of Israel.[1] 24 And We made of them leaders
to guide by Our command when they were patient, and
they were certain of Our communications. 25 Thy Lord
will judge between them on the day of resurrection con-
cerning that wherein they differ. 26 Does it not point
out to them the right way, how many of the generations,
in whose abodes they go about, did We destroy before them ?
Surely there are signs in this; will they not then hear ?
27 Do they not consider that We drive the water to a
land having no herbage, then We bring forth thereby
seed-produce of which their cattle and they themselves
eat ; do they not see ? 28 And they say : When will
this judgment take place, if you are truthful ? 29 Say :
On the day of judgment the faith of those who (now)
disbelieve will not profit them, nor will they be respited.[2]
30 So turn away from them and wait ; they too are
waiting.

CHAPTER 33

AL-AHZÂB : THE ALLIES

(Medina—9 sections ; 73 verses)

THIS chapter goes under the name of *The Allies*, by which are meant the Quraish confederated with other idolatrous tribes and the Jews, both those who were expelled and those remaining in Medina. All of these with the exception of the last-mentioned,

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[1] The meaning of this verse is that a book was given to Moses containing a clear prophecy about the Holy Prophet. The book which according to that prophecy was to be given to the Holy Prophet is referred to in the word *it*. In fact, the Holy Prophet is here comforted by the knowledge that all the circumstances necessary to establish that likeness shall be brought about ; the most important points in this likeness being the giving of a law, the deliverance of his people, and raising his followers to the position of a great and conquering nation. Or, the personal pronoun in *liqâi-hi* refers to *God*, and the meaning is that revelation has not been given to the Prophet alone, it was also given to Moses ; so no one should entertain a doubt as to the meeting of God.

[2] The day of judgment (*yaum ul fat-h*) is here clearly the day when the power of opposition is brought to naught (v. 26) and the faithful are made triumphant (v. 27).

marched against Medina to annihilate the Muslims. The flight of the confederated host so disheartened the enemies of Islam, that they never again mustered sufficient courage to take the offensive against the Muslims. The battle, therefore, occupying as it does a most prominent place in the early history of Islam, richly deserves the importance it has been accorded.

The date of the revelation of this chapter, which is entirely Medinian, can be easily ascertained, for the battle of the Allies, or the battle of the Ditch, took place in the Shawwal of the fifth year of Hejira. But there are other subjects dealt with in it which belong to a much later period, and its revelation seems to have extended right up to the ninth year of Hejira.

This chapter deals with the two mightiest weapons which have over and over again been wielded against Islam. The first of these is the employment of brute force to crush the Muslims, and the second, the attacks on the purity of the domestic life of the Holy Prophet. The last group of Meccan chapters preceding this announces a series of mighty prophecies foretelling the subsequent greatness of the Muslims, and here we are shown how the forces employed to crush Islam were made ineffective, thus paving the way for the Muslims to attain the promised greatness.

The chapter opens with an injunction requiring perfect obedience to God without regard to the wishes or carpings of the hypocrites and unbelievers. The first section deals with the question of physical and spiritual relationships to which the above injunction is a preliminary, the spiritual relationship being held to be the only one consistent with the office of a prophet. The powerful attack of the Quraish and their allies on the Muslims, spoken of in the second and third sections, was really a resort to brute force made with the object of utterly annihilating Islam. The sections that follow deal with the objections advanced against the domestic life of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet's unrivalled simplicity of life is the key to the refutation of all objections, and that simplicity is shown in the fourth section, in his readiness to part with his wives if they insisted on possessing those comforts of life which were being enjoyed by their sisters in the houses of the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim community was now being changed to one of affluence, and the wives of the Prophet naturally desired to share in the growing prosperity of the community. But this was not to be vouchsafed to them. Not only did the Prophet himself retain the utmost simplicity of life to his last days, no change coming over him though he had risen to be the ruler of the whole of Arabia, but he would not allow even his wives to depart from that high standard of simplicity. To call him a voluptuary is the greatest villainy. The simplicity of life which he retained while actually ruling a country is unparalleled, and is not met with even in the lives of the noblest men. It was within his means to furnish his wives with every material comfort, but instead of pandering to their earthly desires he informed them that if they required such provisions he could not retain them in his household. This abundantly proves the exalted purity of his motives in contracting all these marriages.

The fifth section deals with the Prophet's marriage with Zainab, and refutes the objections advanced against him on that score. The sixth generalizes on the objections raised against his domestic life. The seventh refers to the false reports spread by the hypocrites against the Holy Prophet, and the eighth continues the subject and speaks of the end of those who stirred up sedition against the Holy Prophet and the Muslim rule, while the ninth brings the chapter to a close by exhorting the believers to be faithful to their trusts.

SECTION 1.—Believers' Relationship to the Prophet

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O Prophet! be careful of (thy duty to) God and do
not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites; surely God
is Knowing, Wise;[1] 2 And follow what is revealed to
thee from thy Lord; for God is Aware of what you do;
3 And rely on God; and God is sufficient for a Protector.
4 God has not made for any man two hearts within him;
nor has He made your wives whom you desert your
mothers,[2] nor has He made those whom you assert to
be your sons your real sons;[3] these are the words of
your mouths; and God speaks the truth and He guides to
the way. 5 Assert their relationship to their fathers;
this is more equitable with God; but if you do not know
their fathers, then they are your brethren in faith and your
friends; and there is no blame on you concerning that
in which you made a mistake, but (concerning) that which
your hearts do purposely, (blame may rest on you), and
God is Forgiving, Merciful. 6 The Prophet has a greater
claim on the faithful than they have on themselves, and his
wives are (as) their mothers;[4] and the possessors of

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[1] The chapter was revealed at a time when the powerful and combined forces of the Arabian tribes threatened Medina from without and the hypocrites assisted them from within to crush the Muslims. The Prophet was not to yield to them.

[2] *Zihár* was a technical term for the custom prevailing in Arabia by which the husband would say to his wife, *thou art to me as the back of my mother:* The pronouncement of these words resulted in the cessation of the conjugal relations of husband and wife without bringing about a divorce. It was in fact a case of desertion of the wife, in which she had not the liberty to marry elsewhere. This custom was abolished by Islam.

[3] An adopted son was spoken of as the real son of the man who adopted him. This custom was also abolished. Islam stood for realities, and mere words of mouth without a reality under them were not acceptable to the spirit of Islam.

[4] The Holy Prophet's wives are called the mothers of the faithful not only out of respect for the Prophet, thus showing that the wife shares the

relationship have the better claim in the ordinance of
God to inheritance, one with respect to another, than
(other) believers, and (than) those who have fled (their
homes), except that you do some good to your friends;
this is written in the Book. 7 And when We made a
covenant with the prophets and with thee and with Noah
and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and We
made with them a strong covenant,[1] 8 That He may
question the truthful of their truth, and He has prepared
for the unbelievers a painful chastisement.

SECTION 2.—Allies' Attack on Medina

9 O you who believe! call to mind the favour of God
to you when there came down upon you hosts,[2] and We
sent against them a strong wind[3] and hosts that you saw
not,[4] and God sees what you do. 10 When they came
upon you from above you and from below you, and when
the eyes turned dull, and the hearts rose up to the throats,

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honour of the husband, but also because they were to serve as models of purity and selflessness for half the human race, i.e. womankind, and also because they handed over to posterity that part of the Prophet's sayings and doings to which his companions had no access, the part relating to domestic matters and to life within the home, the part on which the happiness of man depends to a very large extent.

[1] See 3 : 80, where the making of a covenant with the prophets is spoken of, and that covenant is, with regard to the advent of the Holy Prophet, referred to in Acts 3 : 21 and elsewhere. The only difficulty may appear to be that here a covenant is also spoken of as having been made with the Holy Prophet himself. This evidently refers to the Prophet's verifying all previous revelation, as made clear in 3 : 80.

[2] The events narrated in this section and a part of the following relate to the siege of Medina by the combined forces of the Quraish and their allies, viz. the Ghatfan, the Ashja and Murra, the Fezara, the Suleim, and the Bani Sad and Asad, aided by the Jewish tribe of Bani Nazir and Bani Quraiza, the latter of whom had made a treaty of alliance with the Muslims—the entire forces numbering from ten to twenty-five thousand, while the Muslims numbered three thousand at the utmost. The Prophet decided to remain within the town, and a ditch was dug as a protective measure against the onrush of the powerful force. The battle continued for several days, the enemy eventually taking to flight on a stormy night without being able to inflict any loss upon the Muslims.

[3] The reference is to the great hurricane which caused the enemy to fly. Muir says: "Wearied and damped in spirit, the night set in upon them cold and tempestuous. Wind and rain beat mercilessly on the unprotected camp. The storm rose to a hurricane. Fires were extinguished, tents blown down, cooking vessels and other equipage overthrown."

[4] The hosts which could not be seen were the angelic hosts which disheartened the enemy.

and you began to think diverse thoughts of God.[1]
11 There the believers were tried and they were shaken
with a severe shaking. 12 And when the hypocrites and
those in whose hearts was a disease began to say: God
and His Apostle did not promise us (victory) but only to
deceive. 13 And when a party of them said: O people
of Yasrib![2] there is no place to stand for you (here),
therefore go back; and a party of them asked permission
of the Prophet, saying, Our houses are exposed; and
they were not exposed; they only desired to fly away.
14 And if an entry were made upon them (by the enemy)
from the outlying parts of it, then they were asked to wage
war, they would certainly have done it, and they would
not have stayed in it but a little while. 15 And they
had made indeed a covenant with God before, (that) they
would not turn (their) backs; and God's covenant shall
be inquired of. 16 Say: Flight shall not do you any
good if you fly from death or slaughter, and in that case
you will not be allowed to enjoy yourselves but a little.
17 Say: Who is it that can protect you from God if He
intends to do you evil, or (who can do you harm if) He
intends to show you mercy? And they will not find for
themselves besides God any guardian or a helper. 18 God
knows indeed those among you who hinder others and
those who say to their brethren, Come to us; and they
come not to the fight but a little, 19 Being niggardly
with respect to you; but when fear comes, thou wilt see
them looking to thee, their eyes rolling like one swooning
because of death; but when the fear is gone, they smite
you with sharp tongues, being niggardly of the good
things. These have not believed, therefore God has
made their doings naught; and this is easy to God.
20 They think the allies are not gone, and if the allies
should come (again) they would fain be in the desert
with the desert Arabs asking for news about you, and if
they were among you they would not fight save a little.

The words apply to the hypocrites and the weak-hearted, see v. 12; for the thoughts of the faithful, see v. 22. *From above you and from below you* refer to the upper and lower sides of the valley respectively.

[2] *Yasrib* was the name by which Medina was known before the Prophet's flight to that city.

SECTION 3.—Enemy defeated

21 Certainly you have in the Apostle of God an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in God and the latter day and remembers God much.[1] 22 And when the believers saw the allies, they said: This is what God and His Apostle promised us, and God and His Apostle spoke the truth; and it only increased them in faith and submission.[2]
23 Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant which they made with God: of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least; 24 That God may reward the truthful for their truth, and chastise the hypocrites if He please or turn to them (mercifully); for God is Forgiving, Merciful. 25 And God turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not obtain any advantage, and God sufficed the believers in fighting; and God is

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[1] This verse points to a most significant truth and a distinguishing characteristic of the Holy Prophet, viz. that he is the best exemplar and the highest model of virtue for the faithful. A sentimentalist would tell us that as a persecuted reformer at Mecca he offered a noble example, but that as the head of a state at Medina he fought battles, contracted marriages, ordered the slaughter of his enemies, and did many acts of a similar nature which were better left undone. But the object of his advent was not to please sentimentalists by giving some high-sounding but impracticable moral precepts, and by merely offering a noble example of steadfastness under severe persecutions, but rather to give practicable rules of guidance to men living and working in the world, and to illustrate them by his noble example. If he had not led armies he could not have served as a model for a general leading armies to battle; if he had not fought personally he could not have been an exemplar to a soldier laying down his life in the cause of truth, justice, and freedom; if he had not made laws for the guidance of his followers he could never have been regarded as an outstanding example to a legislator; if he had not decided cases he could not have served as a light to judges and magistrates; if he had not married he would have left men unguided practically in half of their everyday duties and could not have shown how to be a kind and affectionate husband and a loving father; if he had not revenged himself on tyrants for the wrongs inflicted on innocent persons, if he had not overcome his persecuting enemies and forgiven them, if he had not overlooked the faults of those attached to him, he could not have been an excellent *exemplar* and a *perfect model*, as he is here pronounced to be.

[2] The reference here is to the Divine promise that a time would come when the combined forces of Arabia would be put to flight. This promise was given long before, and at a time when the Holy Prophet and his few followers were being severely persecuted at Mecca. The words of one such prophecy are: "A mighty host of the allies shall be here put to flight" (38:11). So when the combined forces attacked Medina, the words of the prophecy were before the heart of every true Muslim. They rejoiced because they were certain that the combined forces of the enemy would be put to flight.

Strong, Mighty. 26 And He drove down from their fortresses those of the followers of the Book who backed them and He cast awe into their hearts; some you killed and others you took captive.[1] 27 And He made you heirs to their land and their dwellings and their property, and (to) a land which you have not yet trodden, and God has power over all things.[2]

SECTION 4.—Prophet's Domestic Simplicity

28 O Prophet! say to thy wives: If you desire this world's life and its ornament, come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing:[3]

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[1] The Bani Quraiza were in alliance with the Holy Prophet, and when the enemy laid siege to Medina they were bound to repel the attack. Instead of this they sided with the investing army. Muir admits that "it was agreed that the Quraiza would assist the Quraish," and the words "who backed them from their fortresses" show that they actually helped the enemy. Thus from allies they had turned foes. Therefore, when the besieging army took to flight and the Quraiza returned to their fortress, it was besieged by the Holy Prophet, for to leave such an internal enemy unpunished would have been a source of ever-present danger to the safety of the Muslim community. They remained besieged for twenty-five days, and then expressed their willingness to surrender on condition that they would submit to the sentence of punishment pronounced by Sad bin Muaz. Had they trusted the Prophet, he would probably have given them the same punishment as he gave to the Qainuqa, viz. emigration, but Sad was exasperated by their treachery, and he subjected them to the rigour of the Jewish law, his judgment being that the fighting men should be put to death and the rest made captives. Three hundred men suffered death under this sentence, and their lands fell into the hands of the Muslims. To say that the Prophet dealt with them harshly is to ignore facts. The judgment was given by an arbiter chosen by themselves and even the arbiter applied to them the Jewish law.

[2] The *land which you have not yet trodden* refers to the foreign lands which are here promised to the Muslims and which they conquered later.

[3] The incident to which these verses relate belongs to the ninth year of Hejira. The Holy Prophet was now well-nigh the master of the whole of Arabia, and from poverty the national condition had changed to one of prosperity. It was most natural, in the circumstances, that the wives of the Prophet should desire to be furnished with better necessities of life than they had previously enjoyed. But just at this time we find a revelation enjoining the strictest simplicity of life upon them. Such an injunction could not emanate from an impostor, not even from a man of the world whose power and wealth were increasing daily. If the Prophet had allowed his wives to share in the general prosperity of the community, there could not have been the least objection. But he received a revelation which deprived him and those most nearly related to him of those material benefits which others could easily acquire. The splendours of this world could be obtained, and were not forbidden to any Muslim, but such transitory vanities were not to be admitted within the household of God's Prophet.

29 And if you desire God and His Apostle and the latter
abode, then surely God has prepared for the doers of good
among you a mighty reward. 30 O wives of the Prophet!
whoever of you commits an open indecency, the chastise-
ment shall be increased to her doubly; and this is easy
to God.

PART XXII

31 And whoever of you is obedient to God and His
Apostle and does good, We will give to her her reward
doubly, and We have prepared for her an honourable
sustenance. 32 O wives of the Prophet! you are not
like any other of the women; if you will be on your guard,
then be not soft in (your) speech, lest he in whose heart
is a disease yearn (towards you); and speak a good word.[1]
33 And stay in your houses and do not display your
finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore;[2] and
keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey God
and His Apostle; God only desires to take away the
uncleanness from you, O people of the household! and
to purify you a (thorough) purifying. 34 And remember
what is recited in your houses of the communications
of God and the wisdom;[3] surely God is Knower of sub-
tilties, Aware.

SECTION 5.—Prophet's Marriage with Zainab

35 The men who submit and the women who submit,
and the believing men and the believing women, and the

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[1] Though the injunction is given in particular to the wives of the Prophet, it is really a rule of life for all Muslim women, and promotes purity of heart and chastity in the relation between the sexes. They are not forbidden to speak to men, but as a safeguard against possible inclination of the heart to evil thoughts they are told not to indulge in soft and amorous conversation with the opposite sex.

[2] There is no injunction in the Holy Quran or in the sayings of the Holy Prophet forbidding women from going out; on the other hand, there is a clear saying of the Holy Prophet in the Bukhari allowing women to go out for their needs; and, as a matter of fact, women used to go out in the time of the Holy Prophet. The prohibition here is only against making a display of their finery as women did in the days of ignorance when they went out with uncovered breasts and shoulders.

[3] The wisdom as distinct from the Divine communications, i.e. the Quran, signifies the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. This shows clearly that one object of the marriages of the Holy Prophet was that his wives should be instrumental in transmitting his sayings and practice in the house for the guidance of the believers.

obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful
men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the
patient women, and the humble men and the humble
women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving
women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and
the chaste men and the chaste women, and the men who
remember God much and the women who remember—God
has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.
36 And it behoves not a believing man and a believing
woman that they should have any choice in their matter
when God and His Apostle have decided a matter; and
whoever disobeys God and His Apostle makes a manifest
error.[1] 37 And when thou didst say to him to whom God
had shown favour and to whom thou hadst shown a favour:
Keep thy wife to thyself and be careful of (thy duty to)
God, and thou dost conceal in thy soul what God would
bring to light, and thou dost fear men, and God has a
greater right that thou shouldst fear Him. But when
Zaid had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to
thee as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for
the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted
sons, when they have accomplished their want of them;
and God's command shall be performed.[2] 38 There is no

[1] All commentators agree that this verse was revealed on the occasion when the Holy Prophet demanded Zainab, his cousin through his aunt, in marriage for Zaid, his freed slave. Both Zainab and her brother were averse to this match, because Zaid was a freedman, and it was in obedience to this revelation that their scruples were overcome and Zainab accepted Zaid for her husband.

[2] This verse consists of two distinct and separate parts, the first dealing with Zaid's divorce of Zainab, and the second, beginning with *but when Zaid had accomplished, etc.*, with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Zainab. On account of his great attachment to the Holy Prophet, Zaid was called the son of Muhammad, and he was one of the early converts to Islam. It is to this that the opening words of the verse refer when they speak of Zaid as being one to whom God as well as the Prophet had shown favour. Zainab was the daughter of the Prophet's own aunt; she was one of the early converts to Islam, and the Holy Prophet proposed to her brother that she should be given in marriage to Zaid. Both brother and sister were averse to this match, and only yielded under pressure from the Holy Prophet, for which see the last note. They both desired that the Holy Prophet himself should marry Zainab, but the Prophet insisted that she should accept Zaid.

The marriage was, however, not a happy one. Differences arose, and Zaid made up his mind to divorce Zainab. The news was grieving for the Prophet, for it was he who had insisted upon the marriage, and he advised Zaid not to divorce her and to fear God. The verse does not show exactly what the difference was, but it clearly shows Zaid to have been in the wrong, for he is spoken of as fearing men.

harm in the Prophet doing that which God has ordained
for him: such has been the course of God with respect to
those who have gone before; and the command of God
is a decree that is made absolute: 39 Those who deliver
the messages of God and fear Him, and do not fear any
one but God; and God is sufficient to take account.
40 Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but
he is the Apostle of God and the last of the prophets;
and God is Cognizant of all things.[1]

SECTION 6.—**Prophet's Domestic Life**

41 O you who believe! remember God with frequent
remembrance, 42 And glorify Him morning and evening.
43 He it is who sends His blessings on you, and (so do)
His angels, that He may bring you forth out of darkness
into the light; and He is Merciful to the believers.
44 Their salutation on the day that they meet Him shall
be, Peace, and He has prepared for them an honourable
reward. 45 O Prophet! We have sent thee as a witness,
and as a bearer of good news and as a warner, 46 And
as one inviting to God by His permission, and as a light-
giving sun.[2] 47 And give to the believers the good news
that they shall have a great grace from God. 48 And
do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and leave
unregarded their annoying talk,[3] and rely on God; and God
is sufficient as a Protector. 49 O you who believe!
when you marry the believing women, then divorce them

After she was divorced the Holy Prophet took her in marriage, that being the wish of the lady and her relatives before her marriage with Zaid, and the Prophet was, now that the marriage arranged by him proved unsuccessful, morally bound to accept the wishes of the lady and her relatives. The story that the Holy Prophet was enamoured of her beauty by a sudden look at her, and that Zaid divorced her for this reason is totally opposed to historical facts.

[1] No prophet shall appear after Muhammad, because religion was perfected with him (5:3) and because he was raised as a prophet for all nations of the world and for all ages. Yet as a saying of the Holy Prophet has it, God does speak to the righteous among his followers though they are not prophets.

[2] The words in which the Holy Prophet is spoken of here are a refutation of what the blind critics assert who attack the purity of his domestic life. An impure man, a man moved by sensual desires, a slave to his passions, could not give light to others and raise a whole country from the depth of vice and immorality to the height of purity and perfection.

[3] The reference in these words is to the carpings of the aforesaid critics. The Prophet was now a ruling monarch at Medina, but he was required to bear patiently the carpings and abuses of his own subjects.

before you touch them, you have in their case no term which you should reckon ; so make some provision for them and send them forth a goodly sending forth.
50 O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives whom thou hast given their dowries, and those whom thy right hand possesses out of those whom God has given to thee as prisoners of war, and the daughters of thy paternal uncle and the daughters of thy paternal aunts, and the daughters of thy maternal uncle and the daughters of thy maternal aunts, who fled with thee, and a believing woman if she gave herself to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to marry her—specially for thee, not for the (rest of) believers; We know what We have ordained for them concerning their wives[1] and those whom their right hands possess, in order that no blame may attach to thee; and God is Forgiving, Merciful.
51 Thou mayest put off whom thou pleasest of them, and thou mayest take to thee whom thou pleasest, and whom thou desirest of those whom thou hadst separated provisionally, no blame attaches to thee; this is most proper, so that their eyes may be cool and they may not grieve, and that they should be pleased, all of them, with what thou givest them,[2] and

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[1] This clearly shows that this verse was revealed after 4 : 3, i.e. the verse making polygamy conditional and not allowing more wives than four even when the necessary conditions existed, because the verse plainly tells us that it made an allowance in the case of the Holy Prophet which was not made in the case of other believers. His *wives* were made lawful to the Prophet, which clearly shows that he would have divorced the number in excess of the limit if this verse had not been revealed. He had in fact given shelter to widows as his partners and members of the household in most cases, and it would have been hard upon these women if they had now been deprived of the great honour which they had attained, without any fault on their part. Some of these alliances had, moreover, been contracted to cement the relations of the various tribes; in other cases, some wrong had been redressed as in the case of the marriage with Zainab; and all of them served as examples of virtue and selflessness to women in general. These were in fact so many models of virtue and teachers of righteousness. The Prophet could have dispensed with any one or any number or all of them, and he could have lived with one wife as he did up to the time that he was fifty-five years of age, quite an old man, but it would have been unjust to the ladies to have deprived them of the honour which had been bestowed on them though they had well-deserved it. V. 28 where the Holy Prophet is clearly commanded to put them all off if they had any desire for the world and its ornaments, is the surest testimony that he did not want them for the satisfaction of his passions. Passions, in fact, he had none, as his life up to fifty-five clearly shows.

[2] This verse must be read along with vv. 28 and 29, where a choice is given to the Prophet's wives to remain with him or to part. A similar

God knows what is in your hearts ; and God is Knowing, Forbearing. 52 It is not allowed to thee to take women after this, nor that thou shouldst change them for other wives, though their beauty be pleasing to thee, except what thy right hand possesses ;[1] and God is Watchful over all things.

SECTION 7.—**False Reports spread by Hypocrites**

53 O you who believe ! do not enter the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, not waiting for its cooking being finished—but when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken the food, then disperse—not seeking to listen to talk ; this gives the Prophet trouble, but he forbears from you, and God does not forbear from the truth. And when you ask of them any goods, ask of them from behind a curtain ;[2] this is purer for your hearts and (for) their hearts ; and it does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Apostle of God, nor that you should marry his wives after him, for ever ;[3] for this is grievous in the sight of God. 54 If you do a thing openly or do it in secret, then surely God is Cognizant of all things. 55 There is no blame

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choice is given here to the Prophet. And when his wives preferred to lead simple lives with him rather than seek worldly goods by leaving him, the Prophet was no less considerate for their feelings, for notwithstanding the choice given to him to retain such of his wives as he liked, he did not exercise this choice to the disadvantage of any one of them, but retained them all, as they had chosen to remain with him. They would no doubt have been grieved if they had been deprived of the great honour which had been conferred on them as partners of the Holy Prophet.

[1] Though the marriages which the Holy Prophet had already contracted were declared to be lawful, yet he was not allowed to contract another marriage, not even to divorce one of his wives and take another in her place. This shows clearly that any privilege which the Prophet was allowed was simply for the sake of the wives, not for the sake of the Prophet. It should be borne in mind that the word *husn* rendered here as *beauty* signifies more the beauty of morals than the beauty of the body. *Except what thy right hand possesses* signifies *the wives whom thou hast lawfully married.*

[2] It must be borne in mind that any rule of conduct to be observed in relation to the Holy Prophet is really a rule that must be observed by all in social relations.

[3] The wives of the Prophet enjoyed an honour which they could not have retained if as widows they had contracted another marriage. The object, moreover, that the wives of the Prophet should devote their lives to the faithful communication of what they had learned in the Prophet's house could not have been fulfilled if any of them had contracted a new marriage relation.

on them in respect of their fathers, nor their sons, nor their brothers, nor their brothers' sons, nor their sisters' sons, nor their own women, nor of what their right hands possess; and be careful of (your duty to) God; for God is a witness of all things.
56 God and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.
57 Those who speak evil things of God and His Apostle,[1] God has cursed them in this world and the hereafter, and He has prepared for them an abasing chastisement.
58 And those who speak evil things of the believing men and the believing women without their having earned (it), they are guilty of a false accusation and a manifest sin.

SECTION 8.—**The End of Sedition-mongers**

59 O Prophet! say to thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments; this will be more proper, that they may be known, and thus they will not be given trouble; and God is Forgiving, Merciful.[2]
60 If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease and the sedition-mongers in the city do not desist, We shall certainly set thee over them, then they shall not be thy neighbours in it but for a little while:
61 Being cursed; wherever they are found they shall be seized and murdered.[3]
62 (Such has been) the course of God with respect to those who have gone before; and thou shalt not find any change in the course of God.
63 Men ask thee about the hour. Say: The knowledge of it is only with God, and what will make thee comprehend that the hour may be nigh.
64 God has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a burning fire,
65 To abide therein for long ages; they shall not find a protector or a helper.
66 On the day when their faces shall be turned back into the fire, they shall say: O would that we had obeyed God and obeyed the Apostle!
67 And they shall say: O our

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[1] The reference is to the hypocrites who spoke evil things about the Holy Prophet, and spread false reports. Some such reports have found a way into the collections of traditions.

[2] It is clear from this that Muslim women were still molested at Medina.

[3] These were the people who stirred up sedition and undermined the authority of the Muslim Government; they were in fact rebels who did the work of inciting rebellion by secret methods.

Lord! we obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they
led us astray from the path: 68 O our Lord! give them
a double chastisement and curse them with a great curse.

SECTION 9.—**Muslims to remain Faithful**

69 O you who believe! be not like those who spoke
evil things of Moses,[1] but God cleared him of what they
said, and he was worthy of regard with God. 70 O you
who believe! be careful of (your duty to) God and speak
the right word; 71 He will put your deeds into a right
state for you, and forgive you your sins; and whoever
obeys God and His Apostle, he indeed achieves a mighty
success. 72 We offered the trust to the heavens and the
earth and the mountains, but they refused to be unfaithful
to it and feared from it, and man has turned unfaithful
to it; for he is unjust, ignorant;[2] 73 So God will chastise
the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women and the
polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, and God
will turn (mercifully) to the believing men and the believing
women, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

CHAPTER 34

THE SABA

(*Mecca*—6 *sections*; 54 *verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from that of a city of the same name, i.e. *Saba*, which was situated in Yaman and was destroyed by a flood. The warning given in this chapter applies to all nations that are made great and prosperous, but fall into luxurious habits. Ease engenders evil, which brings decay and ruin. Hence it was a warning to the Quraish, no doubt, but it was equally a warning to the Muslims who were going to be made masters of the earth, lest they should fall into the ways of ease and luxury and suffer the evil consequences of doing so.

The first section asserts the truth of the judgment, a judgment the truth of which shall be witnessed not only in the life after death,

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[1] For a false imputation against Moses by his own people, and even his own sister, see Num. 12. As this chapter deals with false imputations, the case of a false imputation against the prophet in whose likeness the Holy Prophet came is cited, and attention is drawn to the fate of those who had taken part in the accusation.

[2] The meaning is that nature is true to the laws which bring about its evolution, but man is not true to the laws which bring about the development of his faculties and on which, therefore, depends his real happiness.

but which is clearly seen working in this very life. This judgment overtakes individuals as well as nations, and two instances, that of Solomon's kingdom and Saba, are cited in the second section, of how prosperous nations are swept out of existence when they fall into evil ways. Judgment shall therefore overtake the Quraish, and their false deities, we are told in the third section, shall not avail them in the least, and an encounter shall be brought about between the two parties, resulting in a victory for the Muslims. The fourth section describes the plight of the leaders of evil, the leaders and the followers blaming each other. The fifth section states that their very deities shall then be unable to help them, and that they shall be punished as deniers of truth have always been punished. The last section asserts that truth shall prosper and falsehood vanish before it.

From here to the 39th chapter is another group of six chapters which all assert that the Muslims shall be made a great nation, warning them at the same time that if they fall into ease and luxury as nations before them had done, they would fall down from the height to which they attained. They all belong to the middle Meccan period, and may be placed anywhere from the 6th to the 9th year of the Holy Prophet's ministry.

SECTION 1.—**Judgment is certain**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 (All) praise is due to God, Whose is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, and to Him is due (all) praise in the hereafter ; and He is the Wise, the Aware.
2 He knows that which goes down into the earth and that which comes out of it, and that which comes down from the heaven and that which goes up to it ; and He is the Merciful, the Forgiving. 3 And those who disbelieve say : The hour shall not come upon us. Say : Yea ! by my Lord, the Knower of the unseen, it shall certainly come upon you ; not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him, in the heavens or in the earth, and neither less than that nor greater, but (all) is in a clear book, 4 That He may reward those who believe and do good ; these it is for whom is forgiveness and an honourable sustenance.
5 And those who strive hard in opposing Our communications, these it is for whom is a painful chastisement of an evil kind. 6 And those to whom the knowledge has been given see that what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord, that is the truth, and it guides into the path of the Mighty, the Praised. 7 And those who disbelieve say: Shall we point out to you a man, who informs you that

when you are scattered the utmost scattering, you shall then be (raised) in (to) a new creation? 8 He has forged a lie against God or there is madness in him. Nay! those who do not believe in the hereafter are in torment and in great error. 9 Do they not consider what is before them and what is behind them of the heaven and the earth? If We please We will make them low in the land or bring down upon them a portion from the heaven. Surely there is a sign in this for every servant turning (to God).

SECTION 2.—A Lesson in Solomon's Successor and Saba

10 And certainly We gave to David excellence from Us: O mountains! repeat praises with him, and the birds; and We made the iron pliant to him,[1] 11 Saying: Make ample (coats of mail), and assign a time to the making of coats of mail and do good; for I am seeing what you do. 12 And (We made) the wind (subservient) to Solomon, making a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening,[2] and We made a fountain of molten brass to flow out for him;[3] and of the jinn there were those who worked before him by the command of his Lord;[4] and whoever turned aside from Our command from among them, We made him taste of the chastisement of burning. 13 They made for him what he pleased of fortresses and images, and bowls (large) as watering-troughs and cooking-pots that will not move from their place;[5] give thanks, O family of David! and very few

[1] The *making of the iron pliant* to him signifies the extensive use of iron by him in his battles, and so do the coats of mail in the next verse.

[2] The significance is that Solomon's ships were made to traverse a month's journey in a day by favourable winds. For Solomon's navy, see 1 Kings 9:26. Or the meaning is that *his ships went out on a month's journey and came back from a month's journey*, showing the extent of his dominions or that of the trade he kept on.

[3] "Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim" (2 Chron. 4:2).

[4] These jinn were no other than the strangers whom Solomon subjected to his rule and forced into service. See 2 Chron. 2:12–18. Note that the *jinn* of this verse are the *shayáṭín* of 38:37, where it is said that "We subjected to Solomon the *devils*, every builder and diver." Thus the *shayáṭín* or *devils* are explained by the Quran itself to be no others than the builders and divers whom Solomon had forced into labour.

[5] For graving of the cherubims on the walls see 2 Chron. 3:7; for casting of oxen, 2 Chron. 4:3; for making of lavers, pots, basins, etc., 2 Chron. 4:11, 14.

of My servants are grateful. 14 But when We decreed death for him, naught showed them his death but a creature of the earth that ate away his staff;[1] and when it fell down, the jinn came to know plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in abasing torment. 15 Certainly there was a sign for Saba in their abode;[2] two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a good land and a Forgiving Lord! 16 But they turned aside, so We sent upon them a torrent of which the rush could not be withstood, and in place of their two gardens We gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees. 17 This We requited them with because they disbelieved; and We do not punish any but the ungrateful. 18 And We made between them and the towns, which We had blessed, (other) towns to be easily seen, and We apportioned the journey therein:[3] Travel through them nights and days, secure. 19 And they said: O our Lord! make spaces to be longer between our journeys; and they were unjust to themselves; so We made them stories and scattered them with an utter scattering. Surely there are signs in this for every patient, grateful one. 20 And the devil found true his conjecture concerning them, so they follow him, except a party of the believers. 21 And he has no authority over them, but that We may distinguish him who believes in the hereafter

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[1] The reference in *the creature of the earth that ate away his staff* is to his son's weak rule, under whom the kingdom of Solomon went to pieces. It appears that Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, led a life of luxury and ease, and instead of acting on the advice of the older men, he yielded to the pleasure-seeking wishes of his companions (1 Kings 12:13), and it is to his luxurious habits and easy mode of life that the Holy Quran refers when it calls him a *creature of the earth*. The *eating away of his staff* signifies *the disruption of the kingdom*. The *jinn*, as already remarked, mean the rebellious tribes who had been reduced to subjection by Solomon, and who remained in subjection to the Israelites for a time, until the kingdom was shattered.

[2] Saba was "a city of Yaman, also called *Maarib*; it was about three days' journey from Sanaa. The bursting of the dyke of Maarib and the destruction of the city by a flood are historical facts, and happened in about the first or second century of our era" (Palmer's note).

[3] The cities were so close to each other that one could be seen from the other, or they were conspicuous from the road. It is an indication of the great prosperity of the country. The blessed towns are the towns of Syria with which they carried on trade. Muir gives the number of stages from Hadramaut to Ayla to be seventy, as it is to-day.

from him who is in doubt concerning it; and thy Lord
is the Preserver of all things.

SECTION 3.—A Victory for the Muslims

22 Say: Call upon those whom you assert besides God;
they do not control the weight of an atom in the heavens
or in the earth, nor have they any partnership in either,
nor has He among them any one to back (Him) up.
23 And intercession will not avail aught with Him save
of him whom He permits. Until when fear shall be
removed from their hearts, they shall say: What is it
that your Lord said? They shall say: The truth. And
He is the Most High, the Great. 24 Say: Who gives you
the sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Say:
God. And surely we or you are on a right way or in
manifest error. 25 Say: You will not be questioned as to
what we are guilty of, nor shall we be questioned as to
what you do. 26 Say: Our Lord will gather us together,
then will He judge between us with the truth; and He
is the greatest Judge, the All-knowing.[1] 27 Say: Show
me those whom you have joined with Him as associates;
by no means (can you do it). Nay! He is God, the
Mighty, the Wise. 28 And We have not sent thee but
to all the men as a bearer of good news and as a warner,
but most men do not know. 29 And they say: When
will this promise be (fulfilled) if you are truthful? 30 Say:
You have the appointment of a day from which you cannot
hold back any while, nor can you bring it on.

SECTION 4.—The Leaders of Evil

31 And those who disbelieve say: By no means will
we believe in this Quran, nor in that which is before it;
and couldst thou see when the unjust shall be made to
stand before their Lord, bandying words one with another!
Those who were reckoned weak shall say to those who
were proud: Had it not been for you, we would have been
believers. 32 Those who were proud shall say to those
who were deemed weak: Did we turn you away from the
guidance after it had come to you? Nay, you (yourselves)

[1] This is a prophecy which was fulfilled in the first decisive battle which clearly decided the issue between the Muslims and the unbelievers.

were guilty. 33 And those who were deemed weak shall
say to those who were proud: Nay, (it was) planning by
night and day when you told us to disbelieve in God and
to set up likes with Him. And they shall manifest regret
when they shall see the chastisement, and We will put
shackles on the necks of those who disbelieved; they shall
not be requited but what they did. 34 And We never sent
a warner to a town but those who led lives in ease in it
said: We are disbelievers in what you are sent with.
35 And they say: We have more wealth and children,
and we shall not be chastised. 36 Say: My Lord amplifies
the means of subsistence for whom He pleases and straitens
(for whom He pleases), but most men do not know.

SECTION 5.—**Helplessness of False Gods**

37 And not your wealth, nor your children, are the
things which bring you near Us in station; but whoever
believes and does good, these it is for whom is a double
reward for what they do, and they shall be secure in the
highest places. 38 And those who strive in opposing Our
communications shall be caused to be brought to the
chastisement. 39 Say: My Lord amplifies the means of
subsistence for whom He pleases of His servants and
straitens (them) for whom (He pleases), and whatever
thing you spend, He exceeds it in reward, and He is the
best of sustainers. 40 And on the day when He will
gather them all together, then will He say to the angels:
Did these worship you? 41 They shall say: Glory be to
Thee! Thou art our Guardian, not they; nay! they
worshipped the jinn; most of them were believers in
them. 42 So on that day one of you shall not control
profit or harm for another, and We will say to those who
were unjust: Taste the chastisement of the fire which
you called a lie. 43 And when Our clear communications
are recited to them, they say: This is naught but a man
who desires to turn you away from that which your fathers
worshipped. And they say: This is naught but a lie
that is forged. And those who disbelieve say of the truth
when it comes to them: This is clear enchantment.
44 And We have not given them any books which they
read, nor did We send to them before thee a warner.
45 And those before them rejected (the truth), and these

have not yet attained a tenth of what We gave them, but they gave the lie to My apostles, then how was the manifestation of My disapproval.

SECTION 6.—Truth shall prosper.

46 Say: I exhort you only to one thing, that rise up
for God's sake in twos and singly, then ponder: there is
no madness in your fellow-citizen; he is only a warner
to you before a severe chastisement. 47 Say: Whatever
reward I ask you, that is only for yourselves. My reward
is only with God and He is a witness of all things. 48 Say:
My Lord utters the truth, the great Knower of the unseen.
49 Say: The truth has come, and falsehood cannot originate
(a thing) nor can it reproduce (it). 50 Say: If I err, I err
only against my own soul, and if I follow a right direction,
it is because of what my Lord reveals to me; surely He
is Hearing, Nigh. 51 And couldst thou see when they
shall become terrified, then there shall be no escape
and they shall be seized upon from a near place,[1] 52 And
they shall say: We believe in it. And whence shall the
attaining (of faith) be possible to them from a distant
place? [2] 53 And they disbelieved in it before, and they
utter conjectures with regard to the unseen from a distant
place.[3] 54 And a barrier shall be placed between them
and that which they desire, as was done with the likes of
them before; surely they are in a disquieting doubt.

CHAPTER 35

AL-FÂTIR: THE ORIGINATOR

(*Mecca—5 sections; 45 verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the Divine attribute mentioned in its opening verse, what is stated in the chapter being really a manifestation of this attribute, because the *Originator* of the heavens and the earth sweeps away the old order and generates a new one. If truth must prosper, as the previous chapter upholds, a new generation must be raised to propagate that truth.

In the first section it upholds the truth of the Divine promise with

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[1] They were seized upon at Badr and again at Mecca.
[2] For death shall have then removed them into the other world.
[3] Because they have no access to the unseen.

which the last chapter ends, and in the second reasserts the promise that truth will prevail. The third section refers to the rising of a new generation, which must take the place of the old generation that has proved itself unfit to promote the cause of truth and justice in the world. The section that follows promises peace, safety, success, and abundance to the believers, while the last section states that those who are planning to uproot the truth shall themselves perish.

SECTION 1.—Truth of Divine Promise

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 (All) praise is due to God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four ;[1] He increases in creation what He pleases ; surely God has power over all things. 2 Whatever God grants to men of (His) mercy, there is none to withhold it, and what He withholds, there is none to send it forth after that, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. 3 O men ! call to mind the favour of God on you ; is there any Creator besides God who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth ? There is no god but He ; whence are you then turned away ? 4 And if they call thee a liar, truly apostles before thee were called liars, and to God are all affairs returned.
5 O men ! surely the promise of God is true, therefore let not the life of this world deceive you, and let not the arch-deceiver deceive you respecting God. 6 The devil is your enemy, so take him for an enemy ; he only invites his party that they may be inmates of the burning fire.
7 Those who disbelieve shall have a severe chastisement, and those who believe and do good shall have forgiveness and a great reward.

SECTION 2.—Truth shall prevail

8 What ! is he whose evil deed is made fairseeming to him so much so that he considers it good (like the doer of good) ? But God leaves in error whom He pleases

[1] Angels according to the Quran are the immaterial beings who act as ministers to execute the orders of Providence or to execute His judgment. The representation of angels as possessing wings is met with in sacred history, but the *janáh* or *wing* of an angel by no means indicates the fore-limb in a bird which fits it for flight. It is a symbol of *power* enabling these immaterial beings to execute their functions, and in Arabic the word *janáh* stands for *power*.

and guides aright whom He pleases, so let not thy soul
waste away in grief for them; for God is Cognizant of
what they do. 9 And God is He Who sends the winds so
they raise a cloud, then We drive it on to a dead country,
and therewith We give life to the earth after its death;
even so is the quickening. 10 Whoever desires honour,
then to God belongs the honour wholly. To Him do
ascend the goodly words; and the goodly deed, He exalts
it; and those who plan evil deeds, shall have a severe
chastisement; and their plan shall perish.[1] 11 And
God created you of dust, then of the life-germ, then He
made you pairs; and no female bears, nor does she bring
forth, except with His knowledge; and no one whose life
is lengthened has his life lengthened, nor is aught diminished
of one's life, but it is all in a book; surely this is easy to
God. 12 And the two seas are not alike: the one sweet,
that subdues thirst by its excessive sweetness, pleasant
to drink; and the other salt, that burns by its saltness;
yet from each of them you eat fresh flesh and bring forth
ornaments which you wear; and thou seest the ships
cleave through it that you may seek of His bounty and
that you may be grateful. 13 He causes the night to
enter in upon the day, and He causes the day to enter in
upon the night, and He has made subservient (to you)
the sun and the moon; each one follows its course to an
appointed time; this is God, your Lord, His is the
Kingdom; and those whom you call upon besides Him
do not control a straw. 14 If you call on them they shall
not hear your call, and even if they could hear, they shall
not answer you; and on the resurrection day they will
deny your associating them (with God); and none can
inform you like the One Who is Aware.

SECTION 3.—A New Generation

15 O men! you are they who stand in need of God,
and God is He Who is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One.
16 If He please, He will take you off and bring a new
generation. 17 And this is not difficult for God. 18 And
a burdened soul cannot bear the burden of another; and

[1] The ultimate triumph of truth and the destruction of falsehood could not be expressed in clearer words than those used in this verse.

if one weighed down by burden should cry for (another
to carry) its burden, not aught of it shall be carried, even
though he be near of kin. Thou warnest only those who
fear their Lord in secret and keep up prayer; and whoever
purifies himself, he purifies himself only for (the good of)
his own soul; and to God is the eventual coming. 19 And
the blind and the seeing are not alike, 20 Nor the dark-
ness and the light, 21 Nor the shade and the heat,
22 Neither are the living and the dead alike. Surely
God makes whom He pleases hear, and thou canst not
make those hear who are in the graves. 23 Thou art
naught but a warner. 24 We have sent thee with the
truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner; and there
is not a people but a warner has gone among them.[1]
25 And if they call thee a liar, so did those before them
indeed call (their apostles) liars; their apostles had come
to them with clear arguments, and with scriptures, and
with the illuminating book. 26 Then did I punish those
who disbelieved, so how was the manifestation of My
disapproval?

SECTION 4.—**Reward of the Faithful**

27 Dost thou not see that God sends down water from
the cloud, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various
sorts; and in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of
various hues and (others) intensely black? 28 And of men
and beasts and cattle are various species of it likewise;
those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge
fear God; surely God is Mighty, Forgiving. 29 They
who recite the Book of God and keep up prayer and spend
out of what We have given them secretly and openly,
hope for a gain which will not perish, 30 That He may
pay them back fully their rewards and give them more
out of His grace; for He is Forgiving, Multiplier of rewards.

[1] This broad doctrine that a prophet was raised among every nation is taught repeatedly in the Quran, and, curiously enough, it is met with in the earlier revelation at Mecca as well as the later revelation at Medina. This great truth, which had remained hidden for thousands of years from the wisest men of the world, shone upon an unlearned Arabian who could not have even known what nations then existed and what scriptures they possessed. This broad doctrine alone could form the basis of the universality of a Divine message to the whole of mankind. Only he who had the breadth of mind to recognize truth in all could unite all men in one religion and make them pay homage to one Holy Book.

31 And that which We have revealed to thee of the Book,
that is the truth verifying that which is before it; truly
with respect to His servants God is Aware, Seeing. 32 Then
We gave the Book for an inheritance to those whom We
chose from among Our servants; but of them is he who
makes his soul to suffer a loss, and of them is he who takes
a middle course, and of them is he who is foremost in
deeds of goodness by God's permission; this is the great
excellence. 33 Gardens of perpetuity, they shall enter
therein; they shall be made to wear therein bracelets of
gold and pearls, and their dress therein shall be silk.
34 And they shall say: (All) praise is due to God, Who
has made grief to depart from us; our Lord is surely
Forgiving, Multiplier of rewards, 35 Who has made us
alight in a house abiding for ever out of His grace; toil
shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue therein afflict
us.[1] 36 And for those who disbelieve is the fire of hell;
it shall not be finished with them entirely so that they
should die, nor shall the chastisement thereof be lightened
to them: even thus do We retribute every ungrateful
one. 37 And they shall cry therein for succour: O our
Lord! take us out, we will do good deeds other than those
which we used to do. Did We not preserve you alive
long enough, so that he who would be mindful in it should
mind? And there came to you the warner. So taste
because for the unjust there is no helper.

SECTION 5.—**Opponents shall perish**

38 God is the Knower of what is unseen in the heavens
and the earth; He indeed is Cognizant of what is in the
hearts. 39 He it is Who made you rulers in the land;
so whoever disbelieves, his unbelief is against himself; and
their unbelief does not increase the disbelievers with their
Lord in anything except hatred; and their unbelief
does not increase the disbelievers in anything except loss.
40 Say: Have you considered your associates which you
call upon besides God? Show me what part of the earth
they have created, or have they any share in the heavens;
or, have We given them a book so that they follow a clear
argument thereof? Nay, the unjust do not hold out

[1] The idea of a spiritual paradise is expressed here in the clearest terms.

promises one to another but only to deceive. 41 God
upholds the heavens and the earth lest they come to
naught ; and if they should come to naught, there is none
who can uphold them after Him ; surely He is the For-
bearing, the Forgiving. 42 And they swore by God with
the strongest of their oaths that if there came to them a
warner, they would be better guided than any of the nations ;
but when there came to them a warner it increased them
in naught but aversion, 43 (In) behaving proudly in the
land and in planning evil ; and the evil plan shall not
beset any save the authors of it. Then should they wait
for aught except the way of the former people ? For thou
shalt not find any alteration in the course of God ; and
thou shalt not find any change in the course of God.
44 Have they not travelled in the land and seen how was
the end of those before them while they were stronger in
power than these ? And God is not such that any thing
in the heavens or in the earth should escape Him ; surely
He is Knowing, Powerful. 45 And were God to punish
men for what they earn, He would not leave on the back
of it any creature, but He respites them till an appointed
term ; and when their doom shall come, then surely God
does see His servants.

CHAPTER 36

YÁSÍN

(Mecca—5 sections ; 83 verses)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the initial letters *yá, sín,* in which the Holy Prophet is addressed. Like the two preceding chapters and the three that follow, this chapter prophesies that Islam shall be established in the land and triumph over all opposition, and belongs to the same, i.e. the middle Meccan period. The Prophet is here addressed as *man,* in allusion to the fact that humanity attains to its perfection through him.

This chapter upholds the truth of the Holy Quran, whose marvellous power to give life to a dead nation is the subject-matter of the first section. The second speaks in parable of its confirmation in earlier revelation. The third draws attention to certain signs showing that truth must succeed. The fourth shows that its accepters and rejecters shall be dealt with distinctly, so that their reward and requital shall be an evidence of the truth of the Quran

The concluding section draws attention to decrepitude following youth, thus referring to the law of the rise and fall of nations, and concludes by laying stress upon the great power of the Almighty to bring about a regeneration.

SECTION 1.—Quran as the Prophet's Miracle

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O man![1] 2 Consider the Quran full of Wisdom;
3 Truly thou art one of the apostles, 4 On a right way.
5 A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful, 6 That thou
mayest warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so
they are heedless. 7 The word has proved true of most
of them, so they do not believe.[2] 8 We have placed
chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so
they have their heads raised aloft.[3] 9 And We have made
before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then
We have covered them over so that they do not see.
10 And it is alike to them whether thou warn them or
warn them not: they do not believe. 11 Thou canst only
warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent God in secret; so announce to him forgiveness and
an honourable reward. 12 We shall give life to the dead,[4]
and We write down what they have sent before and their
footprints, and We have recorded everything in a clear
writing.[5]

SECTION 2.—Confirmation of Truth

13 And set out to them a parable of the people of the
town, when the messengers came to it. 14 When We

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[1] The meaning of *yásín* in the dialect of Tayy is *yá-in-sán-u*, i.e. *O man!* or *O perfect man!* There is almost a consensus of opinion that the reference in this abbreviation is to the Holy Prophet himself.

[2] Sale's suggestion that the *word* signifies the sentence of damnation pronounced at Adam's fall is a Christian interpretation of a Muslim doctrine. The "word which has proved true" of the Meccans is clearly contained in the words that precede; *they are heedless*, i.e. they do not care for the Prophet's warning, and the result is that they do not believe.

[3] This is a description of the proud attitude of the unbelievers towards the Prophet's preaching. The chains of pride and stubbornness are really the things which prevent them from listening to and accepting the message of the Prophet. The barriers of the next verse are the barriers which prevent them from advancing.

[4] There is also a reference in these words to the spiritual life which was to be given to the dead nation of the Arabs through the Quran.

[5] *What they send before* are their deeds, and *their footprints* are the marks they leave behind for others to follow.

sent to them two, they rejected both of them, then We strengthened (them) with a third, so they said: We are messengers to you.[1] 15 They said: You are naught but mortals like ourselves, nor has the Beneficent God revealed anything; you only lie. 16 They said: Our Lord knows that we are surely messengers to you: 17 And nothing devolves on us but a clear deliverance (of the message). 18 They said: We augur evil from you; if you do not desist, we will stone you, and there shall afflict you a painful chastisement from us. 19 They said: Your evil fortune is with you; what! if you are reminded! Nay, you are an extravagant people. 20 And from the remote part of the city there came a man running; he said:[2] O my people! follow the messengers: 21 Follow him who does not ask you for reward, and they are the followers of the right course:

PART XXIII

22 And what reason have I that I should not serve Him Who brought me into existence? And to Him you shall be brought back: 23 What! shall I take besides Him gods whose intercession, if the Beneficent God should desire to afflict me with a harm, shall not avail me aught, nor shall they be able to deliver me? 24 In that case I shall be in clear error: 25 I believe in your Lord, therefore hear me. 26 It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known 27 Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honoured ones! 28 And We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven nor do

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[1] It should be noted that this is called a parable in the previous verse; therefore it is an error to name a particular town and three messengers who should have gone together thereto. The parable is set forth only to point out the truth of the Holy Prophet. The two messengers sent before are Moses and Jesus, both of whom clearly prophesied the advent of the Holy Prophet, and the third, with whom they are strengthened, is no other than the Holy Prophet himself, the fulfilment of prophecy in whose person without doubt strengthened the truth of previous revelation. The conversion of Arabia and its reclamation from idolatry had been tried both by the followers of Moses and Jesus, and both had failed, and a third messenger was now sent.

[2] This man represents the believer in the parable. Every prophet has testimony borne to his truth by one from among the people themselves.

We ever send down.[1] 29 It was naught but a single cry,
and lo! they were still. 30 Alas for the servants! there
comes not to them an apostle but they mock at him.
31 Do they not consider how many of the generations
have We destroyed before them, because they do not
turn to them. 32 And all of them shall surely be brought
before Us.

SECTION 3.—Signs of the Truth

33 And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life
to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it.[2] 34 And
We make therein gardens of palms and grape-vines, and
We make springs to flow forth in it, 35 That they may
eat of its fruit, and their hands did not make it; will they
not be grateful? 36 Glory be to Him Who created pairs
of all things, of what the earth grows and of their kind
and of what they do not know.[3] 37 And a sign to them
is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo!
they are in the dark;[4] 38 And the sun runs on to a term
appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty,
the Knowing.[5] 39 And for the moon, We have ordained
stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch.
40 Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake
the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all
float on in a sphere.[6] 41 And a sign to them is that We
bear their offspring in the laden ship; 42 And We have

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[1] This removes a misconception with regard to the coming of punishment. Hosts are not sent down from above to chastise the wicked, but causes are brought into existence on this very earth.

[2] Quickening of the dead earth is again and again compared to the transformation which was to be brought about by the Holy Quran. How dead the earth, and particularly Arabia, was at the advent of the Holy Prophet, it is impossible to describe within the limits of a foot-note. If, then, the physical world showed the working of the Divine law that life is restored to the earth after its death, why should not the same law work in the spiritual world?

[3] This verse establishes a great scientific principle that pairs exist in all creation. The Arabs certainly did not know this, nor did any other people know it then.

[4] There is a reference here to the darkness prevailing before the advent of Islam.

[5] This statement may refer to the sun's revolution in space, or to the time when it will cease to give light.

[6] The flotation of the heavenly bodies in their spheres was a statement beyond the ken of an Arabian of 1,300 years ago.

created for them like it what they will ride on.[1] 43 And
if We please, We drown them, then there shall be no
succourer for them, nor shall they be rescued, 44 But
(by) mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time. 45 And
when it is said to them : Guard against what is before you
and what is behind you, that mercy may be had on you.
46 And there comes not to them a communication of the
communications of their Lord but they turn aside from
it. 47 And when it is said to them, Spend out of what
God has given you, those who disbelieve say to those
who believe : Shall we feed him whom, if God please,
He could feed ? You are in naught but clear error.
48 And they say : When will this threat come to pass,
if you are truthful ? 49 They wait not for aught but a
single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend
with one another. 50 So they shall not be able to make
a bequest, nor shall they return to their families.

SECTION 4.—Reward and Punishment

51 And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo ! from
their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. 52 They
shall say : O woe to us ! who has raised us up from our
sleeping-place ? This is what the Beneficent God promised
and the apostles told the truth. 53 There would be
naught but a single cry, when lo ! they shall all be brought
before Us. 54 So this day no soul shall be dealt with
unjustly in the least ; and you shall not be rewarded aught
but that which you did. 55 The dwellers of the garden
shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy.
56 They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on
raised couches. 57 They shall have fruits therein, and
they shall have whatever they desire. 58 Peace : a word
from a Merciful Lord. 59 And withdraw aside to-day,
O guilty ones ! 60 Did I not charge you, O children of
Adam ! that you should not serve the devil ? Surely he
is your open enemy, 61 And that you should serve Me ;
this is the right way. 62 And indeed he led astray
numerous people from among you. What ! could you
not understand ? 63 This is the hell with which you were

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[1] The reference in the creation of the "like" of ships is evidently to airships.

threatened. 64 Enter into it this day because you disbelieved. 65 On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned. 66 And if We please We would put out their eyes, then they would strive to get first to the way, but how should they see? 67 And if We please We would transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return.

SECTION 5.—Old Order changes

68 And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not understand? [1] 69 And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran,[2] 70 That he may warn him who would have life, and (that) the word may prove true against the unbelievers. 71 Do they not see that We have created cattle for them, out of what Our hands have wrought, and they are their masters? 72 And We have subjected them to them, so some of them they ride upon, and others they eat. 73 And therein they have advantages and drinks; will they not be grateful? 74 And they have taken gods besides God that they may be helped. 75 (But) they shall not be able to assist them, and they shall be a host brought up before them. 76 Therefore let not their speech grieve thee; We know what they do in secret and what they do openly. 77 Does not man see that We have created him from the small life-germ? Then lo! he is an open disputant. 78 And he strikes out a likeness for Us, and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? 79 Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Cognizant of all creation, 80 He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). 81 Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower.

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[1] It is a general law of nature that every living thing must deteriorate; the application here is to individuals as well as nations.

[2] Its negation as poetry is meant to convey the seriousness of the prophecies of the Quran.

82 His command, when He intends anything, is only to
say to it, Be, and it is. 83 Therefore glory be to Him
in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him
you shall be brought back.

CHAPTER 37

AS-SÁFFÁT: THE RANGERS

(*Mecca—5 sections; 182 verses*)

THE title of this chapter, *As-Sáffát*, is taken from its opening verse, which is devoted to a description of the faithful. The *sáffát* are those who draw themselves out in ranks and the reference is to the faithful who ranged themselves in lines in prayers and who had later to range themselves in wars against the enemy.

The chapter announces in the first section a clear prophecy of the ultimate prevalence of Unity, and asserts the truth of the judgment in the second; calls attention to the preaching of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elias, Lot, and Jonah in the third, fourth, and fifth sections; and concludes with a clear prediction of the triumph of the Holy Prophet.

SECTION 1.—Unity shall prevail

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider[1] those who draw themselves out in ranks,
2 And those who check, holding in restraint, 3 And those
who recite, being mindful, 4 Surely your God is One;[2]

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[1] I translate *wáw* (lit. *and*) as meaning *consider*. The *wáw* in such places is generally rendered *by*, as signifying *an oath*. It must, however, be borne in mind that the oath in such cases simply draws attention to a certain testimony. The object in taking an oath is to make an assertion more convincing. But in the Quran, when such a form is adopted, the conviction is produced not by mere allegation as in the case of an ordinary oath, but by some clear argument which upholds the truth of the assertion made. Sometimes attention is called in these oaths to obvious laws of nature, as the change of night and day, etc., to infer spiritual laws from them, and on other occasions, the oath reveals a kind of prophecy, so that the fulfilment of the prophecy makes the truth of the preaching of the Prophet to be obvious. The latter is the case here.

[2] The description given in the first three verses applies to the believers. The first verse shows them as *drawing themselves out in ranks*, which the Muslims do five times daily in their prayers in congregation, and may prophetically refer to their subsequently drawing themselves out in ranks in the field of battle against their enemies. The second verse describes them as *holding in restraint* their passions, so that a people who were ruled by passions were so entirely changed that they became complete masters of their passions. The words, however, also contain a prophetical reference to their holding in restraint a powerful enemy bent upon their

5 The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is
between them, and the Lord of the eastern lands. 6 We
have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the
stars, 7 And (there is) a safeguard against every rebellious
devil.[1] 8 They cannot listen to the exalted assembly and
they are reproached from every side,[2] 9 Being driven off,
and for them is a perpetual chastisement, 10 Except
him who snatches off but once, then there follows him a
brightly shining flame.[3] 11 And ask them whether they
are stronger in creation or those (others) whom We have
created. Surely We created them of firm clay.[4] 12 Nay!
thou wonderest while they mock. 13 And when they
are reminded, they mind not, 14 And when they see a
sign, they incite one another to scoff. 15 And they say:
This is nothing but clear enchantment: 16 What! when
we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we
then be raised? 17 Or our fathers of yore? 18 Say:

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extirpation. In the third verse their recitation of the Quran is clearly referred to, and this in fact settles conclusively that the Muslims are spoken of in all three verses. Each of the first two characteristics bears evidence to the truth of the grand message of Islam, the Divine Unity; for as, in the one case, the wonderful change brought about in Arabia by the transformation of a nation deeply immersed in immorality was a clear witness of the purity and Divine source of that message, in the other, the wonderful prophecy of the triumph of the persecuted believers over their powerful enemies was no less a clear proof that some powerful hand was working in support of the Holy Prophet, and this also demonstrated the truth of Divine Unity.

[1] The Prophet's preaching was confronted by a twofold opposition; the opposition of secular classes based on material force, and the opposition of the priestly class, the diviners and the soothsayers, the class known as *kâhin*. It is these soothsayers who are called *the rebellious devils*, because they thought that they could invoke spirits and answer questions put to them relating to the future. This phase of opposition was equally swept away before the forceful tide of Islamic truth and the profession of the *kâhin* disappeared from Arabia as Islam advanced. The mention of *heaven* and *stars* in the previous verse refers to the popular superstition that the diviners and soothsayers obtained their knowledge of the future from the stars.

[2] The reference here is to the conjectures of the soothsayers regarding the future, by which they maintained their ascendancy over the masses. It is pointed out that they have no access whatever to the source of prophecy.

[3] The meaning is, if a soothsayer gets but one opportunity, there soon follows a flame that pierces through the darkness; in other words, the darkness to which the soothsayer leads men is dispelled. The flame dispelling darkness signifies the mighty prophecies of the Prophet.

[4] Those created of firm clay are the spiritually perfect men, the prophets. The verse points to the opposition of the soothsayers to the Prophet, and warns the former that the Prophet will be triumphant, because he is made perfect by God's hand.

Aye! and you shall be abject. 19 So it shall only be a
single chiding, when lo! they shall see. 20 And they
shall say: O woe to us! this is the day of requital. 21 This
is the day of the judgment which you called a lie.

SECTION 2.—The Judgment

22 Gather together those who were unjust and their
associates, and what they used to worship 23 Besides
God, then lead them to the way to hell. 24 And stop
them, for they shall be questioned. 25 What is the
matter with you that you do not help each other?
26 Nay! on that day they shall be submissive. 27 And
some of them shall advance towards others, questioning
each other. 28 They shall say: You used to come to us
from the right side. 29 They shall say: Nay, you
(yourselves) were not believers: 30 And we had no
authority over you, but you were an inordinate people:
31 So the sentence of our Lord has come to pass against
us: (now) we shall surely taste: 32 And we led you
astray, for we ourselves were erring. 33 And they shall
on that day be sharers in the chastisement one with another.
34 Thus do We deal with the guilty. 35 They used to
behave proudly when it was said to them: There is no
god but God: 36 And to say: What! shall we indeed
give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet? 37 Nay:
he has come with the truth and verified the apostles.
38 Certainly you will taste the painful chastisement.
39 And you shall not be rewarded except (for) what you
did, 40 Save the servants of God, the purified ones.
41 For them is a known sustenance,[1] 42 Fruits, and they
shall be highly honoured, 43 In gardens of pleasure,
44 On thrones, facing each other. 45 A bowl shall be
made to go round among them from water running out of
springs, 46 White, delicious to those who drink. 47 There
shall be no trouble in it, nor shall they be exhausted
therewith.[2] 48 And with them shall be those who restrain

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[1] The words *known sustenance* show clearly that the faithful are made to taste of the blessings of paradise in this very life; otherwise they could not have been called *known*.

[2] The whole of this description makes it self-evident that the blessings spoken of are not the physical blessings of this world but spiritual blessings. The drinks of this life sometimes give trouble to man, producing exhaustion, but such are not the drinks of the other life. The name is common, but the nature of the one is not the same as the nature of the other.

the eyes, having beautiful eyes; 49 As if they were eggs carefully protected.[1] 50 Then shall some of them advance to others, questioning each other. 51 A speaker from among them shall say: I had a comrade of mine, 52 Who said: What! art thou indeed of those who accept? 53 What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be brought to judgment? 54 He shall say: Will you look? 55 And he looked and saw him in the midst of hell. 56 He shall say: By God! thou hadst almost caused me to perish: 57 And had it not been for the favour of my Lord, I would have been among those brought up (for punishment). 58 Is it then that we are not going to die, 59 Except our previous death? And we shall not be chastised? 60 Surely this is the mighty achievement. 61 For the like of this let the workers work. 62 Is this better as an entertainment or the tree of *Zaqqúm*? 63 We have made it to be a trial to the unjust. 64 It is a tree that grows in the bottom of the hell; 65 Its produce is as it were the heads of the serpents.[2] 66 Then they shall eat of it and fill (their) bellies with it. 67 Then they shall have after it to drink

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[1] The description of women given here calls attention to the prominent features of the character of a good woman. In the first place, they are described as restraining their eyes, and attention is thus called to the fact that the most valuable virtue of woman is that rare chastity which is described here as *restraint* or freedom of eyes from lust. Then the beauty of their eyes is praised, the suggestion clearly being that the purity of the eye leads to its beauty or that the real beauty of the eye consists in its purity. In the second place, they are described as being eggs carefully protected, which alludes to their pure and unsoiled character. This may be a description of the righteous women who shall accompany their husbands. A saying of the Holy Prophet is recorded in Tirmizi plainly stating that a similar description of women in paradise, given in 56 : 35–38, was made applicable by the Holy Prophet to virtuous women who shall go to paradise. It should, however, be noted that what is apparently a description of women is really a description of the fruits of deeds done in this life, the words adopted being applicable to both, and these are therefore only spiritual blessings, the consequences of good deeds done in this life as manifested in the next which both males and females shall enjoy. One thing certain is that the Quran nowhere speaks of conjugal relations being maintained in the life after death. The blessings which it promises, whatever they may be, are as much meant for men as for women; the only thing certain about them is that their nature is different from the nature of the physical blessings of this life.

[2] *Zaqqúm*, which is the name of a certain tree, stinking and bitter, also means *any deadly food*, and as such it is said to be the food of those in hell. In one dialect the word is applied to fresh butter with dates, and therefore it is called a trial for the unbelievers, for they scoffed at it. The word *Shaitán* occurring in v. 65 is also applied to a sort of serpent.

of a mixture prepared in boiling water. 68 Then their
return shall be to hell.[1] 69 They found their fathers
going astray, 70 And in their footsteps they are being
hastened on. 71 And certainly most of the ancients went
astray before them ; 72 And We sent among them warners.
73 Then see what was the end of those warned, 74 Except
the servants of God, the purified ones.

SECTION 3.—Noah and Abraham

75 And Noah did certainly call upon Us, and most
excellent Answerer of prayers are We. 76 And We
delivered him and his followers from the mighty distress.
77 And We made his offspring the survivors. 78 And
We perpetuated to him (praise) among the later genera-
tions. 79 Peace on Noah among the nations. 80 Thus do
We reward the doers of good, 81 For he was of Our believ-
ing servants. 82 And We drowned the others. 83 And
truly of his party was Abraham. 84 When he came to
his Lord with a free heart, 85 When he said to his sire
and his people : What is it that you worship : 86 A lie—
gods besides God—do you desire ? 87 What is then
your idea about the Lord of the worlds ? 88 And he
looked at the stars, looking up once, 89 Then he said :
I am sick (of these).[2] 90 And they went away from him,
turning back. 91 Then he turned aside to their gods
secretly and said : What ! do you not eat ? 92 What is
the matter with you that you do not speak ? 93 Then
he turned against them secretly, smiting them with the
right hand. 94 And they advanced towards him, hasten-
ing. 95 Said he : What ! do you worship what you hew
out ? 96 And God has created you and what you make.
97 They said : Build for him a building, then cast him
into the burning fire. 98 And they desired a war against
him, but We brought them low. 99 And he said : I
fly to my Lord ; He will guide me : 100 My Lord ! grant
me (a son who should be) of the righteous. 101 So We
gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance.

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[1] These words clearly show that the previous verses only describe the condition of the guilty in this life metaphorically.

[2] These people worshipped stars, and Abraham said he was sick of their worshipping such things. Or he may have been suffering from some ailment and wanted to bring the discussion with his people to an end.

102 And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice thee; consider then what thou seest. He said: O my father! do what thou art commanded; if God please, thou wilt find me of the patient ones.[1] 103 So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead, 104 And We called out to him saying: O Abraham! 105 Thou hast indeed shown the truth of the vision; thus do We reward the doers of good: 106 Surely this is a manifest trial. 107 And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.[2] 108 And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations. 109 Peace be on Abraham. 110 Thus do We reward the doers of good. 111 For he was one of Our believing servants. 112 And We gave him the good news of Isaac, a prophet from among the righteous. 113 And We showered Our blessings on him and on Isaac; and of their offspring are the doers of good, and (also) those who are clearly unjust to their own souls.

SECTION 4.—**Moses, Elias, and Lot**

114 And certainly We conferred a favour on Moses and Aaron. 115 And We delivered them both and their people from the mighty distress. 116 And We helped them, so they were the vanquishers. 117 And We gave them both the Book that made (things) clear. 118 And We guided them both on the right way. 119 And We perpetuated (praise) to them among the later generations; 120 Peace be on Moses and Aaron. 121 Even thus do We reward the doers of good. 122 For they were both of Our believing servants. 123 And Elias was also of

[1] The dream probably meant that Ishmael would have to be sacrificed by being turned out of his home and left in a strange land. That the child spoken of here was Ishmael and not Isaac is made clear by v. 112. This no doubt contradicts the Bible statement, but the fact that Ishmael's descendants kept a memorial of this sacrifice in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca shows clearly that Ishmael, and not Isaac, was the son whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice; and that sacrifice was in one sense accomplished by Abraham leaving Ishmael in a strange land, i.e. at Mecca in Arabia. The Bible contradicts itself when it adds with Isaac the words *thine only son* (Gen. 22 : 2), because Ishmael was sixteen years older than Isaac, and the words *only son* could only be applied to Ishmael before the birth of Isaac.

[2] The *great* sacrifice was the sacrifice of a ram, and it is called great owing to its commemoration to this day.

the apostles. 124 When he said to his people: Do you
not guard (against evil): 125 What! do you call upon
Bal [1] and forsake the best of the creators, 126 God, your
Lord and the Lord of your fathers of yore? 127 But
they called him a liar, therefore they shall be brought up
(for punishment), 128 But not the servants of God, the
purified ones. 129 And We perpetuated to him (praise)
among the later generations, 130 Peace be on Elias.
131 Even thus do We reward the doers of good. 132 For
he was one of Our believing servants. 133 And Lot
was also of the apostles. 134 When We delivered him
and his followers, all, 135 Except an old woman (who
was) amongst those who tarried. 136 Then We destroyed
the others. 137 And surely you pass by them in the
morning, 138 And at night: do you not then understand?

SECTION 5.—**Jonah and the Prophet's Triumph**

139 And Jonah was also of the apostles. 140 When he
fled [2] to a ship completely laden; 141 So he shared (with
them), but was of those who are cast off. 142 And the
fish drew him into its mouth while he did that for which
he was blamed. 143 But had it not been that he was of
those who glorify (Us), 144 He would have tarried in its
belly to the day when they are raised.[3] 145 Then We
cast him on to the vacant surface of the earth while he
was sick. 146 And We caused to grow up for him a gourd-
plant. 147 And We sent him to a hundred thousand,
rather they exceeded. 148 And they believed, so We
gave them provision till a time. 149 Then ask them
whether thy Lord has daughters and they have sons.
150 Or did We create the angels females while they were
witnesses? 151 Now surely it is of their own lie that
they say: 152 God has begotten; and they are surely
liars. 153 Has He chosen daughters in preference to
sons? 154 What is the matter with you, how is it that
you judge? 155 Will you not mind? 156 Or have you

[1] Bal stands for the sun, or the sun-god.
[2] It is quite meaningless to say that Jonah fled from God. It would appear that he fled from his people or from the king.
[3] The Quran does not anywhere state that Jonah was devoured by the fish, for the word *iltaqama*, which is used here, does not necessarily signify the act of devouring, but simply that of drawing or taking into the mouth.

a clear authority? 157 Then bring your book, if you
are truthful. 158 And they assert a relationship between
Him and the jinn; and certainly the jinn do know that
they shall be brought up (for punishment); 159 Glory
be to God (for freedom) from what they describe; 160 But
not so the servants of God, the purified ones. 161 So
you and what you worship, 162 Not against Him can
you cause (any) to fall into trial, 163 Save him who will
go to hell. 164 And there is none of us but has an assigned
place, 165 And we are they who draw themselves out in
ranks. 166 And we are they who declare the glory (of
God).[1] 167 And they used to say: 168 Had we a reminder
from those of yore, 169 We would have been the servants
of God—the purified ones. 170 But (now) they disbelieve
in it, so they will come to know. 171 And Our word has
already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles:
172 That they shall surely be the assisted ones, 173 And
that Our host alone shall be the victorious ones. 174 There-
fore turn away from them till a time, 175 And (then) see
them, for they too shall see. 176 What! would they
hasten on Our chastisement? 177 But when it shall
descend in their court, evil shall then be the morning of
the warned ones. 178 And turn away from them till a
time, 179 And (then) see, for they too shall see. 180 Glory
be to thy Lord, the Lord of Honour, above what they
describe. 181 And peace be on the apostles. 182 And
all praise is due to God, the Lord of the worlds.

CHAPTER 38

SÁD

(*Mecca—5 sections; 88 verses*)

THIS chapter, which is entitled *Sád* from its initial letter, describes the sufferings of prophets at the hands of their enemies. Even prophets like David and Solomon, who ruled mighty kingdoms, and like Job, who had been granted abundance, could not escape opposition and had to suffer at the hands of their enemies, and the Prophet of Arabia could not be an exception. But, as the name of the chapter signifies, God was a *Truthful* God, Who at the height of

[1] The words are put into the mouths of the believers.

opposition had foretold the discomfiture of the enemy, and the final triumph of truth, and His promise would be fulfilled, even as it was fulfilled in the deliverance of earlier prophets from the hands of their enemies.

The first section clearly speaks of the determined opposition of the enemy and prophesies its discomfiture; the second asserts how even a king-prophet like David had his enemies, and how he was delivered from their hands; the third states that even Solomon with all his glory could not escape the opposition of enemies, yet it was the grace of God, not the glory of his kingdom, that delivered him from his enemies. Job's sufferings are spoken of in the fourth section, and the triumph of the righteous is plainly stated; and the typical opposition of the devil to the prophet-man forms the subject-matter of the concluding section.

SECTION 1.—Prophecy of Enemy's Discomfiture

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 God is Truthful.[1] Consider the Quran, possessing eminence.[2] 2 Nay! those who disbelieve are in self-exaltation and opposition. 3 How many did We destroy before them of the generations, then they cried, while the time of escaping had passed away. 4 And they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: This is an enchanter, a liar: 5 What! makes he the gods a single God? A strange thing is this, to be sure! 6 And the chief persons of them break forth, saying: Go and steadily adhere to your gods; this is surely a thing sought after:[3] 7 We never heard of this in the former faith; this is nothing but a forgery: 8 Has the reminder been revealed to him from among us? Nay! they are in doubt as to My reminder. Nay! they have not yet tasted My chastisement! 9 Or is it that they have the treasures of the mercy of thy Lord, the Mighty, the great Giver? 10 Or is it that theirs is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is

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[1] *Sád*, which is also the name of this chapter, stands for *As-Sádiq*, meaning *Truthful God*.

[2] *Zikr* means *eminence* here, as in 43:44. The calling to witness of the Quran possessing eminence indicates that the truth of the Quran will become manifest by the eminence to which it will raise those who follow it.

[3] By *a thing sought after* is to be understood either a thing that the Prophet seeks after but to which he cannot attain, or it is meant that the preaching of the Prophet is a thing that is decreed by fate. They think it is a misfortune that must befall them because it is so decreed by fate.

between them? Then let them ascend in the means.[1]
11 A mighty host of the allies shall be here put to flight.[2]
12 The people of Noah, and Ad, and Pharaoh, the lord of
hosts, rejected (apostles) before them, 13 And Samood
and the people of Lot and the dwellers of the thicket:
these were the parties. 14 There was none of them
but called the apostles liars, so just was My retribution.

SECTION 2.—David and his Enemies

15 Nor do these await aught but a single cry, there being
no delay in it. 16 And they say: O our Lord! hasten
on to us our portion before the day of reckoning. 17 Bear
patiently what they say and remember Our servant David,
the possessor of power; he was frequent in returning
(to God in penitence). 18 We made the mountains subject
to him to declare the glory (of God) at evening and sunrise,
19 And the birds gathered together; all were obedient
to him. 20 And We strengthened his kingdom and We
gave him wisdom and a clear judgment. 21 And has
there come to thee the story of the adversaries, when
they made an entry into the private chamber by ascending
over the walls? 22 When they entered in upon David,
and he was frightened at them, they said: Fear not; two
litigants, of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the
other, therefore decide between us with justice; and do
not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way: 23 This
is my brother; he has ninety-nine ewes and I have a single
ewe; and he said, Make it over to me, and he has prevailed
against me in discourse. 24 He said: Surely he has been
unjust to thee in demanding thy ewe (to add) to his own
ewes; and most of the partners act wrongfully towards
one another, save those who believe and do good, and very
few are they. And David was sure that We had tried him,
so he sought the protection of his Lord, and he fell down
bowing and turned time after time (to Him).[3] 25 So We

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[1] *Asbáb* (sing. *Sabab*) signifies *ropes* or *means*, and *ascending to the means* indicates having recourse to means for keeping up their power intact and avoiding the doom which awaited them.

[2] This is a prophecy relating to the absolute discomfiture and overthrow of the opponents of Islam at a time when they shall combine all possible forces against it. This happened in the battle known as the *battle of the Allies*, see 33 : 22.

[3] The men who thus attacked David by *climbing over the wall* were his enemies, as the Quran plainly states. They had thought of taking David

rectified for him this, and he had indeed a nearness to Us and an excellent resort.
26 O David! We have made thee a ruler in the land, so judge between men with justice and do not follow desire, lest it should lead thee astray from the path of God;[1] for those who go astray from the path of God shall have a severe chastisement because they forgot the day of reckoning.

SECTION 3.—Solomon and his Enemies

27 And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve; and woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire.
28 Shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard (against evil) like the wicked?
29 (It is) a blessed Book We have revealed to thee that they may ponder over its verses, and that those endowed with understanding may be mindful.
30 And We gave to David Solomon; excellent the servant! he was frequent in returning (to God).
31 When there were brought to him in the evening (horses) still when standing, swift when running—
32 And he said: I love the good things on account of the remembrance of my Lord—until they were hidden behind the veil, (he said):
33 Bring them back to me. And he began to stroke (their) legs and necks.[2]
34 And We tried Solomon, and We put on his throne a (mere) body, and he turned (to God).
35 He said: My Lord! do Thou forgive me and

unawares and putting him to death. But David, though terrified, was ready to meet them, and the two men, finding their plan thus frustrated, made an excuse for coming to him in such an unusual manner. The Quran does not anywhere say that these were angels; the suggestion is, moreover, inconsistent with their description as *adversaries*, and with their *climbing over the walls*. The story of David committing adultery and two angels having come to him thus to remind him of the sin is a puerile falsehood. The Bible is responsible for the story, which the Holy Quran regards as utterly false, that David committed adultery.

[1] To rule justly is therefore the path of God according to the Holy Quran.

[2] These plain words are twisted into the puerile story that Solomon, enraged on account of the horses having detained him from his afternoon prayers, began to cut off their legs and necks, as if it were the fault of the horses and not his own fault. But the Quran does not at all say that Solomon neglected any prayer in seeing the horses, nor does it say that he cut off their legs and necks.

grant me a kingdom which it beseems none after me (to spoil); Thou art the great Giver.[1] 36 And We made the wind subservient to him; it made his command to run gently wherever he desired, 37 And the devils, every builder and diver, 38 And others fettered in chains.[2] 39 This is Our free gift, therefore give freely or withhold, without reckoning. 40 And truly he had a nearness to Us and an excellent resort.

SECTION 4.—Job and Triumph of the Righteous

41 And remember Our servant Job, when he called upon his Lord: The devil has afflicted me with toil and torment. 42 Urge with thy foot; here is a cool washing-place and a drink. 43 And We gave him his followers and the like of them with them,[3] as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder to those possessed of understanding. 44 And take in thy hand a bundle of twigs and strike with it,[4] and do not incline to what is false; We found him patient; most excellent the servant! he was frequent in returning (to God). 45 And remember Our servants

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[1] It appears that Solomon knew that his son Rehoboam, the heir-apparent to the throne, was unfit to rule, and therefore, seeing apparent signs of the disruption of the kingdom, or being informed of it by Divine revelation, he turned to God. By the *mere body* that was put on his throne is meant either his son Rehoboam, who lost the allegiance of all except a single tribe of Israel (1 Kings 12 : 17), or Jeroboam, who led the revolt against the house of David, and on becoming king of ten tribes set up image-worship in Dan and Beth-el, the two calves being supposed to be images of Jehovah (1 Kings 12 : 28), and also began the worship of molten images (1 Kings 14 : 9). Hence we find Solomon praying here for a spiritual kingdom, for that is the only kingdom which is not in danger of being spoiled by an heir.

[2] The description given here of the *devils* shows clearly that the designation applies to the men of foreign tribes subjected to Solomon's rule, because it was the latter who were forced into labour by Solomon.

[3] The toil and torment of which Job complains seem to relate to some journey of his in a desert, where he finds himself in an evil plight, on account of the fatigue of the journey and the thirst which afflicts him. He is told not to lose heart, and to go on until he finds his family or his followers. There is no doubt a prophetic reference here to the Holy Prophet's flight to Medina and his finding there not only his Meccan companions, but also *the like of them with them*, i.e. the Ansar of Medina.

[4] The reference is generally supposed to be to Job's wife whom he had sworn to give a hundred blows, but the context shows that his enemies who had been the cause of his trouble are meant, and striking them with a bundle of twigs meant dealing with them leniently. Or the words may be rendered thus: Take in thy hand somewhat of worldly goods and be satisfied with it.

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight.
46 We purified them by a pure quality, the keeping in mind
of the (final) abode. 47 And they were with Us, truly
of the elect, the best. 48 And remember Ishmael and
Elisha and Zulkifl ; and they were all of the best. 49 This
is a reminder ; and surely there is an excellent resort for
the righteous, 50 The gardens of perpetuity, the doors
are opened for them. 51 Reclining therein, calling therein
for many fruits and drink. 52 And with them shall be
those restraining their eyes, equals in age.[1] 53 This is
what you are promised for the day of reckoning. 54 Surely
this is Our sustenance ; it shall never come to an end.
55 This (shall be so) ; and certainly there is an evil resort
for the inordinate ones, 56 Hell ; they shall enter it, so
evil is the resting place. 57 This (shall be so) ; so let
them taste it, boiling and intensely cold (drink).[2] 58 And
other (punishment) of the same kind—of various sorts.
59 This is an army plunging in without consideration
along with you ; no welcome for them ; they shall enter
fire. 60 They shall say : Nay ! you—no welcome to
you ; you did prepare it for us, so evil is the resting place.
61 They shall say : Our Lord ! whoever prepared it first
for us, add Thou to him a double chastisement in the
fire. 62 And they shall say : What is the matter with
us that we do not see men whom we used to count among
the vicious ? 63 Was it that we (only) took them in
scorn, or have our eyes (now) turned aside from them ?
64 That surely is the truth : the contending one with
another of the inmates of the fire.

SECTION 5.—**Devil's Opposition to Adam**

65 Say : I am only a warner, and there is no god but
God, the One, the Subduer (of all), 66 The Lord of the
heavens and the earth and what is between them, the
Mighty, the most Forgiving. 67 Say : It is a message of

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[1] For *those restraining their eyes*, see note on 37 : 49, but here, in addition, they are called *equals in age*, which description as applied to virtuous women is made clearer in 56 : 35 : *We have made them to grow into a new growth*. And as representing the fruits of good deeds, the meaning is clear, viz., that their growth begins with the growth of spiritual life in man.

[2] They shall be made to consume intensely hot and intensely cold drink, because they went to the two extremes and did not follow the mean.

importance,[1] 68 You turn aside from it: 69 I had no knowledge of the exalted chiefs when they contended:[2] 70 Naught is revealed to me save that I am a plain warner. 71 When thy Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a mortal from dust:[3] 72 So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him. 73 And the angels did obeisance, all of them, 74 But not Iblis; he was proud and he was one of the unbelievers. 75 He said: O Iblis! what prevented thee that thou shouldst do obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands? Art thou proud or art thou of the exalted ones? 76 He said: I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fire, and him Thou didst create of dust. 77 He said: Get out of it, for thou art driven away: 78 And My curse is on thee to the day of judgment. 79 He said: My Lord! respite me to the day that they are raised. 80 He said: Thou art of the respited ones, 81 Till the period of the time made known. 82 He said: By Thy might, I will lead them astray, all (of them), 83 Except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones. 84 He said: The truth is and the truth do I speak, 85 That I will fill hell with thee and with those among them who follow thee, all. 86 Say: I do not ask you for any reward for it; nor am I of those who affect. 87 It is nothing but a reminder to the nations. 88 And certainly you will come to know about it after a time.

CHAPTER 39

AZ-ZUMAR: THE COMPANIES

(*Mecca—8 sections; 75 verses*)

THE name of this chapter, *The Companies*, refers to the two classes, the believers and the unbelievers, which receive and reject the truth respectively, and the chapter deals with the fate of each.

Obedience to God is required in the first section. Those who obey are the believers, and those who refuse to obey are the un-

[1] The message of importance is the prophecy of the utter discomfiture of the opponents of the Holy Prophet.

[2] The exalted chiefs are the heavenly beings. What the contention was is stated in the verses that follow.

[3] The creation of Adam and the submission of the angels typifies the raising of a prophet and the submission to him of the good and the righteous.

believers, and the two are spoken of in the next section. The third shows that the Quran is a perfect guidance, and the fourth that its rejecters shall be punished. While the fifth emphasizes the punishment of rejecters, by stating that evil shall not be averted from those who persist in rejection, the sixth calls attention to Divine mercy, which is ever ready to take those by the hand who repent, and therefore sinners have no reason to despair. The last two sections speak of the coming of the judgment, when each of the two parties shall be made to taste that which it deserves.

SECTION 1.—Obedience to God

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The revelation of the Book is from God, the Mighty,
the Wise. 2 We have revealed to thee the Book with
the truth, therefore serve God, being sincere to Him in
obedience. 3 Now, surely, sincere obedience is due to
God (alone); and those who take guardians besides Him,
(saying), We do not serve them save that they may make
us nearer to God, God will judge between them in that in
which they differ; God does not guide him aright who is
a liar, ungrateful. 4 If God desire to take a son to Him-
self, He will choose those He pleases from what He has
created.[1] Glory be to Him; He is God, the One, the
Subduer (of all). 5 He has created the heavens and the
earth with the truth; He makes the night cover the day
and makes the day overtake the night, and He has made
the sun and the moon subservient; each one runs on to
an assigned term; now surely He is the Mighty, the great
Forgiver. 6 He has created you from a single being, then
made its mate of the same (kind), and He has made for
you eight of the cattle in pairs.[2] He creates you in the
wombs of your mothers—creation after creation—in triple
darkness; that is God your Lord, His is the kingdom;
there is no god but He; whence are you then turned
away? 7 If you are ungrateful, then God is Self-suffi-
cient, above all need of you; and He does not like ungrate-

[1] What is pointed out here is that no one holds a relation of peculiar sonship to God, but that it is His chosen servants, chosen above others from among His creation, who are metaphorically called His sons; because in being manifestations of the Divine attributes they stand to God in the same relation as a son stands to a father, being images of those attributes as a son is an image of a father.

[2] See 6 : 144, 145.

fulness in His servants ; and if you are grateful, He likes
it in you ; and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden
of another; then to your Lord is your return, then will
He inform you of what you did ; for He is Cognizant of
what is in the breasts. 8 And when distress afflicts a man
he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him frequently ; and
when He makes him possess a favour from Him, he forgets
that for which he called (upon Him) before, and sets up
rivals to God that he may cause (men) to stray off from
His path. Say : Enjoy thyself in thy ungratefulness a
little, for thou art of the inmates of the fire. 9 What !
he who is obedient during hours of the night, prostrating
himself and standing, takes care of the hereafter and hopes
for the mercy of his Lord ! Say : Are those who know
and those who do not know alike ? Only the men of
understanding are mindful.

SECTION 2.—**Believers and Unbelievers**

10 Say : O my servants who believe ! be careful of
(your duty to) your Lord ; for those who do good in this
world is good, and God's earth is spacious ; only the
patient will be paid back their reward in full without
measure. 11 Say : I am commanded that I should serve
God, being sincere to Him in obedience, 12 And I am
commanded that I shall be the first of those who submit.
13 Say : I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of
a grievous day. 14 Say : I serve God, being sincere to
Him in my obedience ; 15 Serve then what you like
besides Him. Say : The losers are those who shall have
lost themselves and their families on the day of resurrection ;
now surely that is clear loss. 16 They shall have coverings
of fire above them and coverings beneath them ; with
that God makes His servants fear ; so be careful of
(your duty to) Me, O My servants ! 17 And those who
keep off from the worship of the idols and turn to God,
they shall have good news, therefore give good news to
My servants, 18 Those who listen to the word, then follow
the best of it ; these are they whom God has guided, and
these it is who are the men of understanding. 19 As for
him against whom the sentence of chastisement is due !
Canst thou save him who is in the fire ? 20 But those

who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord shall have high places, above them higher places,[1] built (for them), in which flow rivers; (this is) the promise of God; God will not fail in (His) promise.
21 Dost thou not see that God sends down water from the cloud, then makes it go along in the earth in springs, then brings forth therewith herbage of various sorts, then it withers so that thou seest it becoming yellow, then He makes it a thing crushed and broken into pieces? Surely there is a reminder in this for the men of understanding.

SECTION 3.—**Quran a Perfect Guidance**

22 What! is he whose heart God has opened for Islam so that he is in a light from his Lord (like the hard-hearted)? Nay, woe to those whose hearts are hard against the remembrance of God; those are in clear error.
23 God has revealed the best announcement, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of God; this is God's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases; and whom God leaves in error, there is no guide for him.
24 Is he who has to guard himself with his own person against the evil chastisement on the resurrection day . . . ? And it will be said to the unjust: Taste what you earned.
25 Those before them rejected (prophets), therefore there came to them the chastisement from whence they perceived not.
26 So God made them taste disgrace in this world's life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is surely greater; did they but know!
27 And We have set forth to men in this Quran similitudes of every sort that they may mind;
28 An Arabic Quran without any crookedness, that they may guard (against evil).
29 God sets forth a parable: There is a man in whom are (several) partners differing with one another, and there is another man (devoted) wholly to a man. Are the two alike in condition? (All) praise is due to God. Nay! most of them

[1] This shows that there is an unceasing progress in the life after death, for the high places to which the righteous will attain have places still higher above them. Thus the Muslim paradise is not a place for enjoyment, but for an unceasing advancement.

do not know. 30 Thou shalt die and they (too) shall die.
31 Then on the day of resurrection you will contend one
with another before your Lord.

PART XXIV

SECTION 4.—Rejecters shall be abased

32 Who is more unjust than he who utters a lie against
God and (he who) gives the lie to the truth when it comes
to him ; is there not in hell an abode for the unbelievers ?
33 And he who brings the truth and (he who) accepts it—
these are the righteous. 34 They shall have with their
Lord what they please ; that is the reward of the doers
of good ; 35 That God may do away with the worst of
what they did and give them their reward for the best
of what they do. 36 Is not God sufficient for His servant ?
And they seek to frighten thee with those besides Him ;
and whomsoever God leaves in error, there is no guide for
him. 37 And whom God guides, there is none that can
lead him astray ; is not God Mighty, the Lord of retribu-
tion ? 38 And shouldst thou ask them, Who created the
heavens and the earth, they would surely answer : God.
Say : Have you considered that what you call upon besides
God, would they, if God desire to afflict me with harm, be
the removers of His harm, or (would they), if God desire
to show me mercy, be the withholders of His mercy ?
Say : God is sufficient for me ; on Him do the reliant
rely. 39 Say : O my people ! work in your place, I am
a worker ; so you will come to know 40 Who it is to whom
there shall come a chastisement which will disgrace him,
and to whom will be due a lasting chastisement. 41 We
have revealed to thee the Book with the truth for the
sake of men ; so whoever follows the right way, it is for
his own soul, and whoever errs, he errs only to its detri-
ment ; and thou art not a custodian over them.

SECTION 5.—Punishment shall not be averted

42 God takes the souls at the time of their death, and
those that die not, during their sleep ; then He withholds

those on whom He has passed the decree of death and
sends the others back till an appointed term.[1] Surely
there are signs in this for a people who reflect. 43 Or,
have they taken intercessors besides God? Say: What!
even though they have no control over anything, nor
do they understand. 44 Say: God's is the intercession
altogether; His is the kingdom of the heavens and the
earth, then to Him you shall be brought back. 45 And
when God alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do
not believe in the hereafter shrink, and when those besides
Him are mentioned, lo! they are joyful. 46 Say: O
God! Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower
of the unseen and the seen! Thou judgest between Thy
servants as to that wherein they differ. 47 And had
those who are unjust all that is in the earth and the like
of it with it, they would offer it as ransom (to be saved)
from the evil of the chastisement on the day of resurrection;
and what they never thought of shall become plain to them
from God.[2] 48 And the evil (consequences) of what they
wrought shall become plain to them, and the very thing
they mocked at shall beset them. 49 And when harm
afflicts a man he calls upon Us; then when We give him a
favour from Us, he says: I have been given it only by
means of knowledge. Nay, it is a trial, but most of them
do not know. 50 Those before them did say it indeed,
but what they earned availed them not. 51 And there
befell them the evil (consequences) of what they earned;
and those who are unjust from among these—there shall
befall them the evil (consequences) of what they earn, and
they shall not escape. 52 Do they not know that God
makes ample the means of subsistence to whom He pleases,
and He straitens. Surely there are signs in this for a
people who believe.

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[1] This verse affords a conclusive proof that the Quran does not admit the return to life in this world of those who are actually dead. It states that the soul is taken away either in sleep, in which case it is returned, or at death, in which case it is withheld and is not allowed to return. It also shows that according to the Holy Quran the soul that is taken at death is the same as that taken in sleep. In both cases it is the soul, that works good and evil, that is taken away.

[2] *What they never thought of* signifies the overthrow of their power in this life and the manifestation of the evil consequences of their deeds in the hereafter.

SECTION 6.—Divine Mercy

53 Say: O My servants! who have acted extravagantly
against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of
God; for God forgives the sins altogether; for He is the
Forgiving, the Merciful. 54 And return to your Lord time
after time and submit to Him before there comes to you
the chastisement, then you shall not be helped. 55 And
follow the best that has been revealed to you from your
Lord before there comes to you the chastisement all of a
sudden while you do not even perceive; 56 Lest a soul
should say: O woe to me! for what I fell short of my
duty to God, and surely I was of those who laughed to
scorn; 57 Or it should say: Had God guided me, I
would have been of the righteous; 58 Or it should say
when it sees the chastisement: Were there only a returning
for me, I should be of the doers of good. 59 Aye! My
communications came to thee but thou didst reject them,
and thou wert proud and thou wert one of the unbelievers.
60 And on the day of resurrection thou shalt see those
who lied against God: their faces shall be blackened. Is
there not in hell an abode for the proud? 61 And God
shall deliver those who guard (against evil) with their
achievement: evil shall not touch them, nor shall they
grieve. 62 God is the Creator of every thing, and He has
charge over every thing. 63 His are the treasures of the
heavens and the earth; and those who disbelieve in the
communications of God, these it is that are the losers.

SECTION 7.—The Final Judgment

64 Say: What! do you then bid me serve others than
God, O ignorant men? 65 And certainly, it has been
revealed to thee and to those before thee: If thou set
up gods (with God), thy work would surely come to naught,
and thou wouldst be of the losers. 66 Nay! but serve
God alone and be of the thankful. 67 And they have
not honoured God with the honour that is due to Him;
and the whole earth shall be in His grip on the day of
resurrection and the heavens rolled up in His right hand;
glory be to Him, and may He be exalted above what
they associate (with Him). 68 And the trumpet shall be
blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those
that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as God

please. Then it shall be blown again, when lo! they
shall stand up awaiting. 69 And the earth shall beam
with the light of its Lord, and the book shall be laid down,
and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up,
and judgment shall be given between them with justice,
and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. 70 And every
soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He
knows best what they do.

SECTION 8.—**Each Party meets with its Desert**

71 And those who disbelieve shall be driven to hell in
companies; until, when they come to it, its doors shall
be opened, and the keepers of it shall say to them: Did
not there come to you apostles from among you reciting
to you the communications of your Lord and warning you
of the meeting of this day of yours? They shall say:
Yea. But the sentence of punishment was due against
the unbelievers. 72 It shall be said: Enter the gates of
hell to abide therein; so evil is the abode of the proud.
73 And those who are careful of (their duty to) their
Lord shall be conveyed to the garden in companies; until
when they come to it, and its doors shall be opened, and
the keepers of it shall say to them: Peace be on you, you
shall be happy; therefore enter it to abide. 74 And they
shall say: (All) praise is due to God, Who has made good
to us His promise, and He has made us inherit the land;
we may abide in the garden where we please; so goodly
is the reward of the workers. 75 And thou shalt see the
angels going round about the throne glorifying the praise
of their Lord: and judgment shall be given between them
with justice, and it shall be said: All praise is due to
God, the Lord of the worlds.

CHAPTER 40

AL-MU'MIN: THE BELIEVER

(Mecca—9 sections; 85 verses)

FROM this, the 40th, to the 46th chapter, there is a group of seven chapters which all begin with *Há mím*, and are therefore called *zwát-i-Hámím*, i.e. the chapters beginning with *Há mím* They all belong to the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet was at its height and therefore probably belong to the earlier days of

the middle Meccan period. All these chapters are further akin inasmuch as they all offer a solace to the persecuted Muslims, warn the persecutors, and foretell the triumph of truth and the failure of opposition. In fact, the failure of opposing forces is the chief theme of these chapters. There is little history of the earlier prophets, with the exception of Moses and Abraham, and bare references to others or the fate of their people.

This chapter opens with a statement relating to the Divine plan for the protection of the faithful, who are told that they should not be misled by the power of the opponents whose power will soon be broken. The second section continues the subject, only laying greater stress upon the failure of the opponents and the approach of their doom, when they should be perfectly helpless. The next three sections repeat the warning with reference to Moses' history. The sixth states that the apostles of God and the believers in them are always assisted against their opponents, while the seventh calls attention to the Divine favours on man. The last two sections again deal with the end of opposition, repeatedly warning the unbelievers.

SECTION 1.—**Protection of the Faithful**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God![1] 2 The revelation of the
Book is from God, the Mighty, the Knowing, 3 The For-
giver of the sins and the Accepter of repentance, Severe to
punish, Lord of bounty; there is no god but He; to Him
is the eventual coming. 4 None dispute concerning the
communications of God but those who disbelieve, there-
fore let not their going to and fro in the cities deceive
thee. 5 The people of Noah and the parties after them
rejected (prophets) before them, and every nation purposed
against their apostle that they may lay hold on him, and
they disputed by means of the falsehood that they might
thereby render null the truth, therefore I destroyed them;
how was then My retribution! 6 And thus did the word
of thy Lord prove true against those who disbelieved that
they are the inmates of the fire. 7 Those who uphold the
throne and those around Him[2] celebrate the praise of their
Lord and believe in Him and ask protection for those who
believe: Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy

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[1] The *há* stands for *Hamid*, i.e. *the Praised*, and the *mim* stands for *Majid*, i.e. *the Glorious*, the two names of the Divine Being which often occur together. The two letters may also stand for *Ar-Rahmán* and *Ar-Rahím*, i.e. the Beneficent, the Merciful One.

[2] Two classes of angels seem to be spoken of here.

and knowledge, therefore grant protection to those who
turn (to Thee) and follow Thy way, and save them from
the chastisement of the hell: 8 Our Lord! and make them
enter the gardens of perpetuity which Thou hast promised
to them and those who do good of their fathers and their
wives and their offspring, for Thou art the Mighty, the
Wise, 9 And keep them from evil deeds, and whom Thou
keepest from evil deeds this day, indeed Thou hast mercy
on him, and that is the mighty achievement.

SECTION 2.—Failure of Opposition

10 Those who disbelieve shall be cried out to: God's
hatred (of you) when you were called upon to the faith
and you rejected, is indeed greater than your hatred of
yourselves.[1] 11 They shall say: Our Lord! twice didst
Thou make us subject to death, and twice has Thou given
us life,[2] so we do confess our sins: is there then a way
to get out? 12 That is because when God alone was
called upon, you disbelieved, and when associates were
given to Him, you believed; so judgment belongs to
God, the High, the Great. 13 He it is Who shows you
His signs and sends down for you sustenance from heaven,
and none minds but he who turns (to Him) again and
again. 14 Therefore call upon God, being sincere to
Him in obedience, though the unbelievers are averse:
15 Exalter of degrees, Lord of the throne; He makes
the spirit to light by His command upon whom He pleases
of His servants,[3] that he may warn (men) of the day of
meeting, 16 (Of) the day when they shall come forth;
nothing concerning them remains hidden to God. To
whom belongs the kingdom this day? To God, the One,

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[1] The violent hatred referred to is the hatred of the evildoers for themselves, when the evil consequences of their evil deeds become manifest to them.

[2] The first death is that which marks the end of life in this world, and the second death is the spiritual death which is the hell of the next life. The two lives are the natural life of man and his being raised to taste of the consequences of his deeds. Generally, however, the first state of death is considered to be the state of nothingness from which man is brought into existence.

[3] The spirit (Ar. *rúh*) here signifies revelation which is granted to prophets. As God speaks to the righteous among the followers of the Holy Prophet, the verse also includes the *mujaddids*, i.e. the reformers promised to the Muslims at the commencement of every century.

the Subduer (of all). 17 This day every soul shall be rewarded for what it has earned; no injustice (shall be done) this day; surely God is quick in reckoning. 18 And warn them of the day that draws near, when hearts shall rise up to the throats, grieving inwardly; the unjust shall not have any compassionate friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed. 19 He knows the stealthy looks and that which the breasts conceal. 20 And God judges with the truth; and those whom they call upon besides Him cannot judge aught; surely God is the Hearing, the Seeing.

SECTION 3.—Moses is sent to Pharaoh

21 Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those who were before them? Mightier than these were they in strength and in fortifications in the land, but God destroyed them for their sins; and there was none to protect them from (the punishment of) God. 22 That was because there came to them their apostles with clear arguments, but they disbelieved, so God destroyed them; surely He is Strong, Severe in retribution. 23 And We sent Moses with Our communications and clear authority 24 To Pharaoh and Haman and Korah, but they said: A lying enchanter. 25 And when he brought to them the truth from Us, they said: Slay the sons of those who believe with him and keep their women alive; and the struggle of the unbelievers ended only in perdition. 26 And Pharaoh said: Let me alone that I may slay Moses and let him call upon his Lord; I fear that he will change your religion or that he will make mischief to appear in the land. 27 And Moses said: I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord from every proud one who does not believe in the day of reckoning.

SECTION 4.—A Believer of Pharaoh's People

28 And a believing man of Pharaoh's people who hid his faith said: What! will you slay a man because he says, My Lord is God, and indeed he has brought to you clear arguments from your Lord? And if he be a liar, on him will be his lie; and if he be truthful, there will befall

you some of that which he threatens you (with) ; for God
does not guide him who is extravagant, a liar : 29 O my
people ! yours is the kingdom this day, being masters in
the land, but who will help us against the punishment of
God if it come to us ? Pharaoh said : I do not show you
aught but that which I see (myself), and I do not make you
follow any but the right way. 30 And he who believed
said : O my people ! I fear for you the like of what befell
the parties : 31 The like of what befell the people of Noah
and Ad and Samood and those after them, and God does
not desire injustice for (His) servants : 32 And, O my
people ! I fear for you the day of calling out,[1] 33 The
day on which you will turn back retreating ; there shall be
no saviour for you from God, and whomsoever God leaves
in error, there is no guide for him : 34 And Joseph came
to you before with clear arguments, but you ever remained
in doubt as to what he brought ; until when he died, you
said : God will never raise an apostle after him. Thus does
God leave him in error who is extravagant, a doubter,
35 Those who dispute concerning the communications of
God without any authority that He has given them :
greatly hated is it by God and by those who believe. Thus
does God set a seal over the heart of every proud, haughty
one. 36 And Pharaoh said : O Haman ! build for me a
tower that I may attain the means of access, 37 The
means of access to the heavens, then reach the God of
Moses, and I think him to be a liar indeed. And thus
the evil of his deed was made fairseeming to Pharaoh, and
he was turned away from the way ; and the struggle of
Pharaoh was not (to end) in aught but (his) ruin.

SECTION 5.—**A Believer of Pharaoh's People**

38 And he who believed said : O my people ! follow
me, I will guide you to the right course : 39 O my people !
this life of the world is only a (passing) enjoyment, and
the hereafter is truly the abode to settle : 40 Whoever
does an evil, he shall not be recompensed (with aught) but
the like of it, and whoever does good, whether male or

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[1] *The day of calling out* of this verse, and *the day that draws nigh* of v. 18, signify *the day of distress* for the guilty, and refer to the day of judgment as well as the day of their doom in this life.

female, and he is a believer, these shall enter the garden,
in which they shall be given sustenance without measure:
41 And, O my people! how is it that I call you to salva-
tion and you call me to the fire? 42 You call on me
that I should disbelieve in God and associate with Him
that of which I have no knowledge, and I call you to the
Mighty, the most Forgiving: 43 There is no doubt that
what you call me to has no title to be called to in this world,
nor in the hereafter, and that our turning back is to God,
and that the extravagant are the inmates of the fire:
44 So you shall remember what I say to you, and I entrust
my affair to God, for God sees the servants. 45 And
God protected him from the evil (consequences) of what
they planned, and the most evil chastisement overtook
Pharaoh's people: 46 The fire; they shall be brought
before it (every) morning and evening, and on the day
when the hour shall come to pass (it shall be said): Make
Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement. 47 And
when they shall contend one with another in the fire, the
weak shall say to those who were proud: We were your
followers; will you then avert from us a portion of the
fire? 48 Those who were proud shall say: We are all
in it: God has judged between the servants. 49 And
those who are in the fire shall say to the keepers of hell:
Call upon your Lord that He may lighten to us one day
of the chastisement. 50 They shall say: Did not your
apostles come to you with clear arguments? They shall
say: Yea. They shall say: Then call. And in vain
shall the unbelievers call.

SECTION 6.—**Apostles and Faithful are helped**

51 Surely We help Our apostles, and those who believe,
in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall
stand up, 52 The day on which their excuse shall not
benefit the unjust, and for them is curse and for them is
the evil abode. 53 And We gave Moses the guidance
indeed, and We made the children of Israel inherit the
Book, 54 A guidance and a reminder to the men of under-
standing. 55 Therefore be patient; the promise of God
is true; and seek (the) protection (of God) from thy sin [1]

[1] *Thy sin* in this case is the prospective sin, for every human being is liable to sin. *Ghafr* which is the root of *istighfâr* means *the covering of*

and celebrate the praise of thy Lord in the evening and
the morning. 56 (As for) those who dispute about the
communications of God without any authority that has
come to them, there is naught in their breasts but (a
desire) to become great which they shall never attain to;
therefore seek refuge in God, for He is the Hearing, the
Seeing. 57 The creation of the heavens and the earth
is certainly greater than the creation of the men, but most
people do not know.[1] 58 And the blind and the seeing
are not alike, nor those who believe and do good and the
evil-doer; little is it that you are mindful. 59 Surely
the hour is coming, there is no doubt therein, but most
people do not believe. 60 And your Lord says: Call
upon Me, I will answer you. Those who are too proud
for My service shall soon enter hell abased.

SECTION 7.—Divine Favours on Man

61 God is He Who made for you the night that you may
rest therein and the day to see. God is truly Gracious to
men, but most men do not give thanks. 62 That is
God, your Lord, the Creator of every thing; there is no
God but He; whence are you then turned away? 63 Thus
were turned away those who denied the communications
of God. 64 God is He Who made the earth a resting-place
for you and the heaven a structure, and He formed you,

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a thing with that which will protect it from dirt, and *istighfár* is therefore the *seeking of protection*. Now this, as Qastalani says, is in two ways: (1) the protection of a man from sin, and (2) his protection from the consequences of sin or the punishment of sin. *Istighfár* in the case of a man who has committed a sin, therefore, carries the significance of forgiveness, while in the case of a man who has not committed a sin, it means the seeking of the protection of God from the commission of sin. It is in this latter sense that the word is used here, as the Holy Prophet is described again and again as purifying others from sin; see 62:2, 9:103, 3:163, etc. But even the Prophet stood in need of seeking Divine protection from the commission of sin, and this was exactly the reason that he was free from sin, because he was constantly seeking Divine protection. In fact, the constant seeking of Divine protection is the only source of strength for man, and hence it is that in 3:16, the *mustaghfirín*, i.e. the seekers of Divine protection, are placed above even the patient and the truthful ones.

[1] By *an-nás*, or *the men*, some understand that *ad-dajjál*, or *the Antichrist*, is meant, which shows that the *Antichirst* is not the name of a person. This interpretation is based on a saying of the Holy Prophet: "From the creation of man to the coming of the Hour there is no creation greater in temptation than that of the Antichrist."

then made goodly your forms, and He provided you with goodly things; that is God, your Lord; blessed is God, the Lord of the worlds.
65 He is the Living, there is no god but He; therefore call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience; (all) praise is due to God, the Lord of the worlds.
66 Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides God when clear arguments have come to me from my Lord, and I am commanded that I should submit to the Lord of the worlds.
67 He it is Who created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child, then that you may attain your maturity, then that you may be old—and of you there are some who are caused to die before—and that you may reach an appointed term, and that you may understand.
68 He it is Who gives life and brings death; and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, and it is.

SECTION 8.—End of Opposition

69 Hast thou not seen those who dispute with respect to the communications of God: how are they turned away?
70 Those who reject the Book and that with which We have sent Our apostles; so they shall soon come to know,
71 When the fetters and the chains shall be on their necks; they shall be dragged
72 Into hot water, then in the fire shall they be burned;
73 Then shall it be said to them: Where is that which you used to set up
74 Besides God? They shall say: They are gone away from us, nay, we used not to call upon anything before. Thus does God confound the unbelievers.
75 That is because you exulted in the land unjustly and because you behaved insolently.
76 Enter the gates of hell to abide therein; evil is the abode of the proud.
77 So be patient, for the promise of God is true. And should We make thee see part of what We threaten them with, or should We cause thee to die, to Us shall they be returned.
78 And We did send apostles before thee: there are some of them that We have mentioned to thee and there are others whom We have not mentioned to thee; and it was not meet for an apostle that he should bring a sign except with God's permission, but when the command of God

came, judgment was given with truth, and those who treated (it) as a lie were lost.

SECTION 9.—End of Opposition

79 God is He Who made the cattle for you that you
may ride on some of them, and some of them you eat.
80 And there are advantages for you in them, and that
you may attain thereon a want which is in your breasts,
and upon them and upon the ships you are borne. 81 And
He shows you His signs: which then of God's signs will
you deny? 82 Have they not journeyed in the land
and seen how was the end of those before them? They
were more (in numbers) than these and greater in
strength and in fortifications in the land, but what they
earned did not avail them. 83 And when their apostles
came to them with clear arguments, they exulted in what
they had with them of knowledge and there beset them
that which they used to mock. 84 But when they saw Our
punishment, they said: We believe in God alone and
we deny what we used to associate with Him. 85 But
their belief was not going to profit them when they had
seen Our punishment; (this is) God's law, which has
indeed obtained in the matter of His servants, and there
the unbelievers are lost.

CHAPTER 41

HÁ MÍM

(Mecca—6 sections; 54 verses)

THIS chapter bears the name of its initial letters, but the word *fussilat*, i.e. *made plain*, is added to distinguish it from other chapters of the same group. It is the second chapter of the *Há mím* group. As regards its subject-matter, date of revelation, and connection with the preceding chapter, the introductory note to the last chapter is sufficient. The first section contains an invitation to the acceptance of the truth; the second gives a warning in case of persistence in rejection; the third refers to the evidence of man's own faculties against the rejection of truth; the fourth shows that believers are strengthened by inspiration; the fifth points to the effect of revelation, which gives life to those who are morally and spiritually dead and heals the spiritual diseases of man. But the concluding section tells us that, if all these warnings and arguments are not heeded, the doom is inevitable, the signs of which could be witnessed in the gradual spread of truth.

SECTION 1.—Invitation to the Truth

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God! 2 A revelation from the
Beneficent, the Merciful God: 3 A Book of which the
verses are made plain, an Arabic Quran for a people who
know: 4 A herald of good news and warner, but most
of them turn aside so they hear not. 5 And they say:
Our hearts are under coverings from that to which thou
callest us, and there is a heaviness in our ears, and a veil
hangs between us and thee, so work, we too are working.[1]
6 Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me
that your God is one God, therefore follow the right way
to Him and ask His forgiveness; and woe to the poly-
theists, 7 (To) those who do not give alms and they are
unbelievers in the hereafter. 8 (As for) those who believe
and do good, they shall have a reward never to be cut off.

SECTION 2.—The Warning

9 Say: What! do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who
created the earth in two periods, and do you set up equals
with Him? That is the Lord of the worlds. 10 And He
made in it mountains above its surface, and He blessed
therein and made therein its foods, in four periods:[2] alike
for the seekers. 11 Again, He directed Himself to the
heaven and it is a vapour,[3] so He said to it and to the
earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both
said: We come willingly. 12 So He ordained them seven

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[1] The coverings of the hearts, the heaviness of the ears, and the hanging of the veils are used simply to indicate their own determined rejection of the truth; they resolved neither to open their hearts, lest the truth should enter them, nor to lend their ears so that they may even hear the preaching of the Prophet.

[2] The periods referred to here are the same as those spoken of elsewhere, and indicate only so many stages through which a thing has passed. The earth, we are told here, has passed through six stages. It is first described as being created in two periods, i.e. as passing through two stages. The first stage was that in which it was in a fiery state and the second that in which a crust was formed. Then there are the four stages of v. 10; the making of mountains, then blessing the earth or causing the waters to flow in it, and lastly the creation therein of foods which includes the creation of vegetable life in the third stage and that of the animal life in the fourth.

[3] *It is a vapour.* That is the first stage. This description of heaven moreover shows that the Holy Quran did not agree with the then prevailing ideas about heaven.

heavens in two periods,[1] and revealed in every heaven its
affair; and We adorned the lower heaven with brilliant
stars and (made it) to guard; that is the decree of the
Mighty, the Knowing. 13 But if they turn aside, then
say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of
Ad and Samood. 14 When their apostles came to them
from before them and from behind them, saying, Serve
nothing but God, they said: If our Lord had pleased He
would have sent down angels, so we are disbelievers in
that with which you are sent. 15 Then as to Ad, they were
unjustly proud in the land, and they said: Who is
mightier in strength than we? Did they not see that God
Who created them was mightier than they in strength, and
they denied Our communications? 16 So We sent on
them a furious wind in unlucky days, that We may make
them taste the chastisement of abasement in this world's
life; and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly
much more abasing, and they shall not be helped. 17 And
as to Samood, We showed them the right way; but they
chose error above guidance, so there overtook them the
scourge of an abasing chastisement for what they earned.
18 And We delivered those who believed and guarded
(against evil).

SECTION 3.—**Man's Evidence against himself**

19 And on the day that the enemies of God shall be
brought together to the fire, then they shall be formed into
groups. 20 Until when they come to it, their ears and
their eyes and their bodies shall bear witness against them
as to what they did. 21 And they shall say to their
bodies: Why have you borne witness against us? They
shall say: God Who makes everything speak has made us
speak, and He created you at first, and to Him you shall
be brought back. 22 And you did not veil yourselves lest
your ears and your eyes and your bodies should bear
witness against you, but you thought that God did not
know most of what you did. 23 And that was your (evil)
thought which you entertained about your Lord that has

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[1] The two periods of the making of heavenly bodies are in accordance with the two periods of the making of earth in v. 9. The concluding words of v. 11 refer to the prevalence of one law in the whole universe.

tumbled you down into perdition, so are you become of
the lost ones. 24 Then if they will endure, still the fire
is their abode ; and if they ask for goodwill, then are they
not of those who shall be granted goodwill. 25 And We
have appointed for them comrades so they have made
fairseeming to them what is before them and what is behind
them, and the word proved true against them—among the
nations of the jinn and the men that have passed away
before them—that they shall surely be losers.

SECTION 4.—**Believers are strengthened**

26 And those who disbelieve say : Do not listen to
this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may
overcome. 27 So We will make those who disbelieve
taste a severe chastisement, and We will reward them for
the evil deeds they used to do. 28 That is the reward of
the enemies of God—the fire ; for them therein shall be
the house of long abiding ; a requital for their denying
Our communications. 29 And those who disbelieve will
say : Our Lord ! show us those who led us astray from
among the jinn and the men that we may trample them
under our feet so that they may be of the lowest. 30 (As
for) those who say, Our Lord is God, then continue in the
right way, the angels descend upon them, saying : Fear
not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden
which you were promised : 31 We are your guardians in
this world's life and in the hereafter, and you shall have
therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein
what you ask for :[1] 32 An entertainment by the For-
giving, the Merciful.

SECTION 5.—**Effect of Revelation**

33 And who speaks better than he who calls to God
while he himself does good and says : I am of those who
submit ? 34 And not alike are the good and the evil.
Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo ! he between whom

[1] This verse and the one before it clearly show that it is in this life that the angels descend upon the faithful, giving them the joyful news that they should not have any fear. It is an error to think that this coming of the angels relates to the next life. It is here, when the faithful are persecuted and oppressed, and when the powers of evil have the upper hand, that those assurances are most needed.

and thee was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.
35 And none are made to receive it but those who are
patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have
a mighty good fortune. 36 And if an interference of the
devil should cause thee mischief,[1] seek refuge in God;
surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing. 37 And among
His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the
moon; do not make obeisance to the sun nor to the moon;
and make obeisance to God Who created them, if Him it
is that you serve. 38 But if they are proud, yet those with
thy Lord glorify Him during the night and the day, and
they are not tired. 39 And among His signs is this, that
thou seest the earth still, but when We send down on it
the water, it stirs and swells; surely He Who gives it life
is the Giver of life to the dead; He has power over all
things.[2] 40 They who deviate from the right way con-
cerning Our communications are not hidden from Us.
What! is he who is cast into the fire better, or he who comes
safe on the day of resurrection? Do what you like, surely
He sees what you do. 41 They who disbelieved in the
Reminder when it came to them, and surely it is a Mighty
Book: 42 Falsehood shall not come to it from before it
nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the
Praised One. 43 Naught indeed is said to thee but what
was said to the apostles before thee; surely thy Lord
is the Lord of forgiveness and the Lord of painful retribu-
tion. 44 And if We had made it a Quran in a foreign
tongue, they would have said: Why have not its com-
munications been made clear? What! a foreign (tongue)
and Arabic![3] Say: It is to those who believe a guidance
and a healing; and (as for) those who do not believe, there
is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them; these
shall be called to from a far-off place.

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[1] The devil here stands for the evil-doers who interfere with the progress of truth.

[2] The effect of rain upon earth is likened to the effect of the Quran upon the hearts of men, and thus attention is drawn to the evidence of the truth of the Quran. The word *dead*, in the "Giver of life to the dead," signifies those who were spiritually dead.

[3] I.e. a foreign tongue could not equal Arabic in felicity of expression. But *A'jam* also means obscure, while *'Arabi* signifies what is made clear; and accordingly the meaning may be: And if We had allowed the Quran to remain obscure, etc. The first utterances of the Quran regarding the fate of the wicked are mostly clothed in metaphorical language and the alternative significance appears more to suit the context.

SECTION 6.—**Gradual spread of Truth**

45 And certainly We gave the Book to Moses, but it
has been differed about ; and had not a word already gone
forth from thy Lord, judgment would have been given
between them ; and truly they are in a disquieting doubt
about it. 46 Whoever does good, it is for his own soul,
and whoever does evil, it is against it; and thy Lord is
not in the least unjust to the servants.

PART XXV

47 To Him is referred the knowledge of the hour. And
there come not forth any of the fruits from their coverings,
nor does a female bear, nor does she give birth, but with
His knowledge ; and on the day when He shall call out to
them, Where are (those whom you called) My associates,
they shall say : We declare to Thee, none of us is a witness.
48 And away from them shall go what they called upon
before, and they shall know for certain that there is no
escape for them. 49 Man is never tired of praying for
good, and if evil touch him, he is despairing, hopeless.
50 And if We make him taste mercy from Us after distress
that has touched him, he would say : This is of me, and
I do not think the hour will come to pass, and if I am sent
back to my Lord, I shall have with Him sure good ; but
We will certainly inform those who disbelieved of what
they did, and We will certainly make them taste of hard
chastisement. 51 And when We show favour to man, he
turns aside and withdraws himself ; and when evil touches
him, he makes lengthy supplications. 52 Say : Tell me,
if it is from God, and you disbelieve in it, who is in greater
error than he who is in a prolonged opposition ? 53 We
will soon show them Our signs in remote regions and in
their own souls,[1] until it will become quite clear to them

[1] People were being drawn to Islam from the borders of Arabia as well as from among the Meccans themselves. This was a clear sign that truth was advancing, notwithstanding the severest opposition, and that an unseen hand was working in support of the Holy Prophet ; for, had it not been so, the strong and determined opposition it encountered would have utterly annihilated Islam. That was a sign for the Meccans. But the word *áfáq*, meaning *borders* or *extremities of the earth*, or *its remote sides*, shows the meaning to be that Islam shall spread to the most distant regions of the earth, while *anfusi-him* denotes *their own people*, or the

that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards thy
Lord that He is a witness over all things? 54 Now surely
they are in doubt as to the meeting of their Lord; now
surely He encompasses all things.

CHAPTER 42

ASH-SHÚRÁ: THE COUNSEL

(*Mecca—5 sections; 53 verses*)

THIS is the third chapter of the *Há mím* group, and is known as *The Counsel.* The title is taken from v. 38, which enjoins the Muslims to make it a rule to take counsel in all affairs of importance. The injunction lays down, in fact, the basis of government by council or parliamentary government.

As regards the date of revelation and the context, see the introductory note to chapter 40. Having spoken of the consequences of the rejection of truth in the last chapter, we are here told that Divine mercy is predominant over all other Divine attributes, and accordingly the first section tells us that even the act of warning is a merciful act on the part of the Divine Being, for He reveals His will through His prophets, while His angels solicit forgiveness for men. The second section states that the Divine judgment must be given to settle differences. The third gives good news to the faithful. The fourth section calls attention to the fact that even the unjust are not suddenly punished for their shortcomings, but God, being their Creator, forbears with them and even removes their afflictions; therefore the believers should be patient under trials and forgive their enemies. The last section states that the Quran, being a revelation from the Divine Being, guides aright, hence those who do not follow its directions will find themselves in an evil plight.

SECTION 1.—Mercy in Warning

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious, 2 Knowing, Hearing, Powerful
God.[1] 3 Thus does God, the Mighty, the Wise, reveal to
thee, and (thus He revealed) to those before thee. 4 What-
ever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His,

Arabians. What is stated here is this that Islam will quickly spread, not only in Arabia but in the remote regions of the earth, and this prophecy is contained in a chapter revealed at Mecca, when the Muslims were being severely persecuted and the message of Islam had apparently little hope of finding acceptance anywhere.

[1] The first two letters are the same as at the commencement of chapter 40. In the latter three *'ain* stands for *'alím* or *Knowing*, *sín* for *samí'* or *Hearing*, *qáf* for *qadír* or *Powerful.*

and He is the High, the Great. 5 The heavens may almost
rend asunder from above them and the angels celebrate
the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on
earth ;[1] now surely God is the Forgiving, the Merciful.
6 And (as for) those who take guardians besides Him,
God watches over them, and thou hast not charge over
them. 7 And thus have We revealed to thee an Arabic
Quran, that thou mayest warn the mother city and those
around it, and that thou mayest give warning of the day
of gathering together wherein is no doubt ; a party shall
be in the garden and (another) party in the burning fire.
8 And if God had pleased He would have made them
a single nation, but He makes whom He pleases enter into
His mercy, and the unjust it is that shall have no guardian
or helper. 9 Or have they taken guardians besides Him ?
But God is the Guardian, and He gives life to the dead,
and He has power over all things.

SECTION 2.—A Judgment settling Differences

10 And in whatever thing you disagree, the judgment
thereof is (in) God's (hand) ; that is God, my Lord, on
Him do I rely and to Him do I turn time after time. 11 The
Originator of the heavens and the earth ; He made mates
for you from among yourselves, and mates of the cattle
too, multiplying you thereby ; nothing is like a likeness
of Him ; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.[2] 12 His are
the treasures of the heavens and the earth ; He makes
ample and straitens the means of subsistence for whom
He pleases ; surely He is Cognizant of all things. 13 He
has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined
upon Noah and that which We have revealed to thee, and
that which We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and
Jesus, that keep to obedience and be not divided therein ;
hard to the unbelievers is that which thou callest them
to ; God chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides
to Himself him who turns (to Him) frequently. 14 And

[1] The Divine displeasure at the wickedness of man is very great, but His mercy supersedes all, so that His angels ask forgiveness for men.

[2] So transcendent is the Divine Being, and so far above all material conceptions, that a likeness of Him cannot be imagined, even metaphorically, for not only is nothing *like Him*, but, as stated here, *nothing is like a likeness of Him.*

they did not become divided until after knowledge had come
to them out of envy among themselves; and had not a
word gone forth from thy Lord till an appointed term,
judgment would have been given between them; and
those who were made to inherit the Book after them are
surely in disquieting doubt concerning it. 15 To this then
go on inviting, and go on steadfastly on the right way as
thou art commanded, and do not follow their low desires,
and say: I believe in what God has revealed of the
Book, and I am commanded to do justice between you;
God is our Lord and your Lord; we shall have our deeds
and you shall have your deeds; no plea need there be
(now) between us and you; God will gather us together,
and to Him is the return. 16 And (as for) those who dis-
pute about God after that obedience has been rendered to
Him, their plea is null with their Lord, and upon them is
wrath, and for them is severe chastisement. 17 God it
is Who revealed the Book with truth, and the balance,[1]
and what shall make thee know that haply the hour be
nigh. 18 Those who do not believe in it would hasten
it on, and those who believe are in fear from it, and they
know that it is the truth. Now surely those who dispute
obstinately concerning the hour are in a great error.
19 God is Benignant to His servants; He gives sustenance
to whom He pleases; and He is the Strong, the Mighty.

SECTION 3.—Good News for the Faithful

20 Whoever desires the gain of the hereafter, We will
give him more of that gain; and whoever desires the gain
of this world, We give him of it, and in the hereafter he
shall have no portion. 21 Or have they associates who
have prescribed for them any religion that God does not
sanction? And were it not for the word of judgment,
decision would have been given between them; and the
unjust shall have a painful chastisement. 22 Thou wilt
see the unjust fearing on account of what they have earned,
and it must befall them; and those who believe and do

[1] The *balance* signifies the *law*, by which the rights and obligations of men are weighed. Mark how material terms are converted into spiritual usage by the Holy Quran. A right realization of this point removes many of the difficulties in the study of the Holy Book.

good shall be in the meadows of the gardens; they shall
have what they please with their Lord: that is the great
grace. 23 That is of which God gives the good news to
His servants, (to) those who believe and do good deeds.
Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for
relatives;[1] and whoever earns good, We give him more of
good therein; for God is Forgiving, Grateful. 24 Or do
they say: He has forged a lie against God? If God
pleased, He would seal thy heart,[2] and God will blot out
the falsehood and confirm the truth with His words; for
He is Cognizant of what is in the hearts. 25 And He it
is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons
the evil deeds, and He knows what you do; 26 And He
answers those who believe and do good deeds, and gives
them more out of His grace; and (as for) the unbelievers,
they shall have a severe chastisement. 27 And if God
should amplify the provision for His servants they would
revolt in the earth; but He sends it down according to
a measure as He pleases; for He is Aware of, Seeing, His
servants. 28 And He it is Who sends down the rain after
they have despaired, and He unfolds His mercy; and He
is the Guardian, the Praised One. 29 And one of His signs
is the creation of the heavens and the earth and what He
has spread forth in both of them of living beings; and
when He pleases He is All-powerful to gather them together.

SECTION 4.—**Believers to be Patient and Forgiving**

30 And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account
of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons
most (sins). 31 And you cannot escape in the earth, and
you shall not have a Guardian or a Helper besides God.
32 And among His signs are the ships in the sea like

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[1] That the Prophet asked for no reward is repeatedly stated in the Holy Quran. *Love for relatives* was one of the great messages brought by him. The Arabs were one nation, but they were hopelessly divided, and to unite them was the first great work to be done. But these words may also carry the significance, I do not ask of you any reward for it, but *love for attaining the nearness of God*. Elsewhere we have: "I do not ask you for any reward except that he who will may take the way to his Lord" (25 : 57).

[2] The sealing of the Prophet's heart does not imply its being sealed against the truth which was revealed to him, but the making of it secure against their abuses, for they abused the Prophet and called him an impostor.

mountains. 33 If He pleases, He causes the wind to
become still so that they lie motionless on its back; surely
there are signs in this for every patient, grateful one,
34 Or He may make them founder for what they have
earned, and (even then) pardon most; 35 And (that)
those who dispute about Our communications may know
(that) there is no place of refuge for them. 36 So what-
ever thing you are given, that is only a provision of this
world's life, and what is with God is better and more
lasting for those who believe and rely on their Lord.
37 And those who shun the great sins and indecencies,
and whenever they are angry they forgive. 38 And those
who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and their
affair is (decided by) counsel among themselves, and who
spend out of what We have given them.[1] 39 And those
who, when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves,
40 And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but
whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward
from God; for He does not love the unjust.[2] 41 And

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[1] It is clear that at this early period the Muslims had no important matters to decide for which they might have stood in need of counsel, yet between the two injunctions which are the basis of a true Islamic life a third is inserted enjoining that, as a rule, counsel should be taken. The injunction is clearly meant to prepare them for transacting the momentous affairs of state and all matters connected with national weal or woe. In fact, the word *amr*, which I have translated as *affair*, means *command*; and *amr-ul-Allah* or *God's command*, often signifies the establishment of the kingdom of God, which stands for an Islamic kingdom. The use of the word *amr*, therefore, here refers to the Islamic kingdom, the affairs of which must be transacted by counsel. In this Islam has laid the basis of government by parliaments, and the idea found a clear practical expression in the early days of the Caliphate, when the *Khalífa* had to refer every important affair to a *Majlis-i-Shúrá* (council), and it is strange indeed that government by parliament is now looked upon by Europeans as an institution which is quite foreign to Islam and unsuited for the Muslim people.

[2] A golden rule relating to forgiveness of evil is given here. The rule laid down is that evil must be requited by punishment proportionate thereto. Note here that punishment which is meted out for an evil is called a *sayyiah* or an *evil*, because the Arabs speak of the requital of an evil in terms of that evil. Also note that the punishment must be proportionate to the evil. Again, forgiveness is not neglected, nor preached in such a manner as to make it impracticable. There is in Islam neither the one extreme of *tooth for tooth* nor the opposite one of *turning the left cheek when the right is smitten*, or *giving away the cloak to one who has already wrongfully taken the coat* of his brother; it is the golden and beautiful mean that forgiveness may be exercised if forgiveness will mend the matter, and do good to the wrong-doer himself. The object to be kept in view is *to amend*, whether it may be attained by giving proportionate punishment or by exercising forgiveness.

whoever defends himself after his being oppressed, these it is against whom there is no way (to blame). 42 The way (to blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly; these shall have a painful chastisement. 43 And whoever is patient and forgiving, that surely is of the affairs the doing of which should be determined upon.

SECTION 5.—Revelation guides aright

44 And whomsoever God leaves in error, he has no guardian after Him; and thou shalt see the unjust saying, when they see the chastisement: Is there any way to return? 45 And thou shalt see them brought before it humbling themselves because of the abasement, looking with a faint glance. And those who believe shall say: The losers are they who have lost themselves and their followers on the resurrection day. Now surely the iniquitous shall remain in lasting chastisement. 46 And they shall have no friends to help them besides God; and whomsoever God leaves in error, he shall have no way. 47 Hearken to your Lord before there comes the day from God for which there shall be no averting; you shall have no refuge on that day, nor shall it be yours to make a denial. 48 But if they turn aside, We have not sent thee as a watcher over them; on thee is only to deliver (the message); and when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat; and if an evil afflicts them on account of what their hands have already done, then man is ungrateful. 49 God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He pleases; He grants to whom He pleases daughters and grants to whom He pleases sons, 50 Or He makes them of both sorts, male and female; and He makes whom He pleases barren; surely He is the Knowing, the Powerful. 51 And it is not for any mortal that God should speak to him except by inspiring or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases[1]; surely He is High, Wise. 52 And thus

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[1] According to this verse God speaks to men in three ways: (1) By *wahy*, which literally signifies a hasty suggestion or an idea by which a man is inspired. This is not revelation proper, as there are no words communicated to the recipient. (2) From behind a veil, such as a vision or a *kashf*, in both which cases a sight is seen in sleep or in a waking condition, or an *ilhám* in which the words are heard or seen written or the

did We reveal to thee an inspired book [1] by Our command;
thou didst not know what the Book was, nor (what) the
faith (was), but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom
We please of Our servants; and thou truly showest the
way to the right path: 53 The path of God, Whose is
whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the
earth; now surely to God do all affairs eventually come.

CHAPTER 43

AZ-ZUKHRUF: GOLD

(*Mecca—7 sections; 89 verses*)

THIS is the fourth chapter of the *Há mím* group, and is so named from the mention of *gold* in v. 35, where it is stated that God does not choose a man for abundance of gold and silver, but for the great qualities of head and heart.

The chapter opens with a declaration of the revelation of the Holy Quran from the Almighty God, as do all the chapters of this group. It then states that, notwithstanding the extravagance of the Arabs, the reminder is not withheld from them. Divine Unity is then declared, because it is the chief object which Divine revelation must establish. The second section is devoted to a condemnation of the various sorts of polytheism. The third begins with a mention of Abraham, the father of many a chosen one of God, and after referring to the Prophet's rejection, answers the objection as to why an influential or a wealthy man was not chosen to convey the Divine message. The fourth follows, stating that evil deeds must be followed by evil consequences. The fifth shows how a great ruler like Pharaoh was destroyed when he opposed Moses, and the sixth refers to Jesus' prophethood and the idolaters' objection to it, and they are told that Jesus was only a prophet and his position affords no justification for their idolatry. The last section contrasts the ultimate condition of the two parties, the believers and the unbelievers.

SECTION 1.—Divine Unity

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God! 2 Consider the Book that
makes manifest: 3 We have made it an Arabic Quran

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recipient utters the words involuntarily. This last is the highest form of revelation which is received by the non-prophets. (3) What is called revelation technically, being words which are conveyed by the angel to the recipient of the revelation. This is called *wahy-i-matluww* or revelation that is recited, and this form of revelation is granted only to prophets of God.

[1] The Arabic word is *rúh*, which means *spirit* as well as *revelation*, because revelation gives the life spiritual. Hence the translation.

that you may understand. 4 And it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom.[1] 5 What! shall We then turn away the reminder from you altogether because you are an extravagant people? 6 And how many a prophet have We sent among the ancients. 7 And there came not to them a prophet but they mocked at him. 8 Then We destroyed those who were stronger than these in prowess, and the example of the ancients has gone before. 9 And if thou shouldst ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth, they would certainly say: The Mighty, the Knowing One, has created them: 10 He Who made the earth a resting-place for you, and made in it ways for you that you may go aright. 11 And He Who sends down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We raise to life thereby a dead country; even thus shall you be brought forth. 12 And He Who created pairs of all things, and made for you of the ships and the cattle what you ride on, 13 That you may firmly sit on their backs, and remember the favour of your Lord when you are firmly seated thereon, and say: Glory be to Him Who made this subservient to us and we were not able to do it, 14 And surely to our Lord we must return. 15 And they assign to Him a part of His servants; man, to be sure, is clearly ungrateful.

SECTION 2.—**Polytheism condemned**

16 What! has He taken daughters to Himself of what He Himself creates and chosen you to have sons? 17 And when one of them is given news of that of which he sets up a likeness for the Beneficent God, his face becomes black and he is full of rage: 18 What! that which is made in ornaments and which in contention is unable to make plain speech![2] 19 And they make the angels—them who are the servants of the Beneficent God—female (divinities).

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[1] *Umm-ul-Kitáb* literally signifies *mother* or *original of the Book*, and the opening chapter of the Quran is also known by this name, because, in its essence, it contains the whole of the Quran. But here it signifies the original source from which the Quran comes, i.e. Divine Knowledge.

[2] The Arabs had their feminine divinities and they called the angels daughters of God. Yet the birth of a daughter was looked upon as a calamity by them as stated in v. 17. V. 18 represents their ideas, or the reference is to the idols which were bedecked with ornaments.

What! did they witness their creation? Their evidence shall be written down and they shall be questioned.
20 And they say: If the Beneficent God had pleased, we should never have worshipped them. They have no knowledge of this; they only lie.
21 Or have We given them a book before it so that they hold fast to it?
22 Nay! they say: We found our fathers on a course, and by their footsteps we are guided.
23 And thus We did not send before thee any warner in a town, but those who led easy lives in it said: We found our fathers on a course, and we are followers of their footsteps.
24 (The warner) said: What! even if I bring to you a better guide than that on which you found your fathers? They said: We are unbelievers in that with which you are sent.
25 So We inflicted retribution on them; and see what was the end of the rejecters.

SECTION 3.—**God's choice of a Prophet**

26 And when Abraham said to his sire and his people: I am clear of what you worship,
27 Save Him Who created me, for He will guide me.
28 And he made it a word[1] to continue in his posterity that they may return.
29 Nay! I gave them and their fathers to enjoy until there came to them the truth and an Apostle making manifest (the truth).
30 And when there came to them the truth they said: This is enchantment and we are disbelievers in it.
31 And they say: Why was not this Quran revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?[2]
32 Do they distribute the mercy of thy Lord? We distribute among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We have exalted some of them above others in degrees, that some of them may take others in subjection; and the mercy of thy Lord is better than what they amass.[3]
33 And were it not that all people had been a single nation, We would have assigned to those who disbelieve in the

[1] I.e. Divine Unity.

[2] The two towns referred to are Mecca and Taif. They would not follow any but an important man of the world. So low and earthly were their desires that moral greatness possessed no value in their eyes.

[3] That is, as there are differences in the external conditions of men, so there are differences in their spiritual and moral qualifications, and God's choice for prophethood does not depend on wealth but on internal worth.

Beneficent God (to make) of silver the roofs of their houses
and the stairs by which they ascend, 34 And the doors
of their houses and the couches on which they recline,
35 And of gold; and all this is naught but provision of
this world's life, and the hereafter is with thy Lord only
for those who guard (against evil).

SECTION 4.—Evil Consequences of Opposition

36 And whoever turns himself away from the remem-
brance of the Beneficent God, We appoint for him a devil,
so he becomes his associate.[1] 37 And surely they turn
them away from the (right) path, and they think that
they are guided aright. 38 Until when he comes to Us,
he shall say: O would that between me and thee there
were the distance of the East and the West;[2] so evil is
the associate! 39 And since you were unjust, it will not
profit you this day that you are sharers in the chastisement.
40 What! canst thou make the deaf to hear or guide the
blind and him who is in clear error? 41 But if We should
take thee away, still We shall inflict retribution on them;
42 Rather We will show thee that which We have promised
them; for We are the possessors of full power over them.[3]
43 Therefore hold fast to that which has been revealed
to thee, for thou art on the right path. 44 And truly it
is a reminder for thee and thy people, and you shall soon be
questioned. 45 And ask those of Our apostles whom We
sent before thee: Did We ever appoint gods to be
worshipped besides the Beneficent God?

SECTION 5.—End of Pharaoh's Opposition to Moses

46 And We sent Moses with Our communications to
Pharaoh and his chiefs, so he said: I am the apostle of
the Lord of the worlds. 47 And when he came to them
with Our signs, lo! they laughed at them. 48 And We

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[1] As the words that follow show, the devil here is no other than the evil companion of man who leads him to evil.

[2] The word which I translate *the East and the West* is *mashriqain*, which would literally signify *the two easts*. But the dual number in such cases often denotes the thing mentioned with its opposite.

[3] The clear promise of punishment overtaking the opponents of the Holy Prophet in his lifetime is here asserted in forcible language.

did not show them a sign but it was greater than its like,[1]
and We overtook them with chastisement that they may
turn. 49 And they said: O enchanter! call on thy
Lord for our sake, as He has made the covenant with thee;
we shall surely be the followers of the right way. 50 But
when We removed from them the chastisement, lo! they
broke the pledge. 51 And Pharaoh proclaimed amongst
his people: O my people! is not the kingdom of Egypt
mine? And these rivers that flow beneath me? Do you
not then see? 52 Nay! I am better than this fellow,
who is contemptible, and who can hardly speak distinctly:
53 Why have not bracelets of gold been put upon him,
or why have there not come with him angels as com-
panions? 54 So he incited his people to levity and they
obeyed him, for they were a transgressing people. 55 So
when they displeased Us, We inflicted retribution on them,
and We drowned them all together, 56 And We made
them a precedent and example to the later generations.

SECTION 6.—**Jesus was only a Prophet**

57 And when a description of the son of Mary is given,
lo! thy people raise a clamour thereat. 58 And they
say: Are our gods or is he the better?[2] They do not
set it forth to thee save by way of disputation; nay, they
are a contentious people. 59 He was naught but a servant
on whom We bestowed favour, and We made him an
example for the children of Israel. 60 And if We please,
We could make among you angels to be rulers in the land.
61 And surely it is the knowledge of the hour, therefore
have no doubt about it and follow me: this is the right
path.[3] 62 And let not the devil prevent you; for he is

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[1] The meaning is that great signs were shown, each sign being greater than the one which preceded it.

[2] Why should not the same honour, they said, be shown to their national gods as was shown to the god of another nation—for was not Jesus accepted as God by the Christians? The answer is contained in the next verse: he was honoured not because he was taken as a god, but because he was a chosen servant of God.

[3] The context shows clearly that the pronoun *it* refers to the Holy Quran, and the meaning is that the Holy Quran gives the knowledge of the hour, by which is meant either the resurrection or the doom of its opponents. If the pronoun in *innahú* is taken to refer to Jesus, the mean-

your open enemy. 63 And when Jesus came with clear arguments, he said: I have come to you indeed with wisdom, and that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in; so be careful of (your duty to) God and obey me: 64 God is surely my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. 65 But parties from among them differed, so woe to those who were unjust because of the chastisement of a painful day. 66 Do they wait for aught but the hour, that it should come upon them all of a sudden while they do not perceive? 67 The friends shall on that day be enemies one to another, except those who guard (against evil).

SECTION 7.—**The Two Parties**

68 O My servants! there is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve, 69 Those who believed in Our communications and were submissive: 70 Enter the garden, you and your wives; you shall be made happy. 71 There shall be sent round to them golden bowls and drinking-cups, and therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (wherein) the eyes shall delight, and you shall abide therein. 72 And this is the garden which you are given as an inheritance on account of what you did. 73 For you therein are many fruits of which you shall eat. 74 The guilty shall abide in the chastisement of hell. 75 It shall not be abated from them and they shall therein be despairing. 76 And We were not unjust to them, but they themselves were unjust. 77 And they shall call out: O Malik![1] let thy Lord make an end of us. He shall say: You shall tarry. 78 Certainly We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse to the truth. 79 Or have they settled an affair? But We are the settlers.[2] 80 Or do they think that We do not hear what they conceal and their secret discourses? Aye! and Our messengers with them write down. 81 Say: The

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ing would be that Jesus gave the knowledge of the doom of the Israelite nation, as he was their last prophet, and the gift of prophethood was after that taken away from the house of Israel.

[1] *Málik* means literally *Master*. Here it signifies the angel appointed over those in hell.

[2] I.e. their plans against the Holy Prophet would not do any harm to him, for all affairs are really settled by God.

Beneficent God has not a son, so I am the foremost of those
who serve.[1] 82 Glory to the Lord of the heavens and the
earth, the Lord of the throne, from what they describe.
83 So leave them plunging into false discourses and
sporting until they meet their day which they are threatened
with. 84 And He it is Who is God in the heavens and
God in the earth; and He is the Wise, the Knowing.
85 And blessed is He Whose is the kingdom of the heavens
and the earth and what is between them, and with Him
is the knowledge of the hour, and to Him shall you be
brought back. 86 And those whom they call upon besides
Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears
witness of the truth and they know (him).[2] 87 And if
thou shouldst ask them, Who created them, they would
say: God. Whence are they then turned back? 88 And
(to God is known) his cry: O my Lord! they are a
people who do not believe.[3] 89 So turn away from them
and say, Peace, for they shall soon come to know.

CHAPTER 44

AD-DUKHÂN: THE DROUGHT

(*Mecca—3 sections; 59 verses*)

THIS is the fifth chapter of the *Há mím* group. It is known as *The Drought*, from the prophecy of the drought contained in v. 10. This prophecy is followed by another indicating that a severer punishment would follow if the unbelievers did not repent. The case of Pharaoh, who was drowned because he hardened his heart, is then cited. The remaining two sections of the chapter are devoted to a description of the condition of the righteous and the wicked, wherein we find it stated that each is rewarded as he deserves.

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[1] The *in* here is *náfiya* (i.e. meant for negation). The use of the Divine name *Rahmán* here shows that clearly; see 19:92. Sonship is opposed to the Divine attribute of *rahmániyyat*.

[2] The bearer of the witness of truth is no other than the Holy Prophet, and they knew him well, for he was the *Ameen* who had never told a lie.

The verse not only affirms in clear words the intercession of the Holy Prophet on behalf of his followers, but also tells us that a clear proof of his intercession shall be given by raising his followers to dignity while his enemies are discomfited, their idols being unable to intercede on their behalf.

[3] Thus unburdens his mind the man who, after years of hard work among his people and after being subjected to the severest persecutions, finds them planning against his life. He does not pray for their destruction, but simply that they may believe.

The chapter is, as it were, an explanation of what was meant by the doom of the Quraish, which was spoken of at the close of the last chapter. The famine was the lighter punishment, while *the most violent seizing* of v. 16 was a prophecy relating to the utter discomfiture of the Quraish to be accomplished during the conflicts which followed the Flight to Medina.

SECTION 1.—**Lighter Punishment followed by Severer**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God! 2 Consider the Book that
makes manifest (the truth). 3 We revealed it on a blessed
night[1]—We are ever warning—4 Therein every wise
affair is made distinct,[2] 5 A command from Us; for We
are the senders (of apostles), 6 A mercy from thy Lord;
for he is the Hearing, the Knowing: 7 The Lord of the
heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you
would be sure. 8 There is no god but He; He gives life
and causes death; your Lord and the Lord of your fathers
of yore. 9 Nay, they are in doubt, they sport. 10 There-
fore keep waiting for the day when the heaven shall bring
a clear drought, 11 That shall overtake men; this is a
painful chastisement. 12 Our Lord! remove from us
the chastisement; we shall believe.[3] 13 How shall they
be reminded, and there came to them an Apostle making
clear (the truth), 14 Yet they turned their backs on him
and said: One taught (by others), a madman. 15 We

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[1] The revelation of the Holy Quran on *a blessed night* has a deeper meaning beneath it than the mere fact that the revelation began on the blessed night which is elsewhere called *lailat-ul-qadr* (97 : 1)—one of the last ten nights in the month of *Ramadan*. The *night* stands for a time of darkness, and hence a time of ignorance, when true knowledge disappears from the world. A prophet's advent is always preceded by such darkness, and when the Holy Prophet Muhammad made his appearance, such darkness prevailed in all countries. This night is called a blessed night because it was followed by the greatest manifestation of Divine light.

[2] Because Divine revelation distinguishes truth from falsehood and reveals the treasures of wisdom to men.

[3] The statements made in these verses are all prophetical, and such is also the statement of v. 15, *We will remove the punishment a little,* because the removal of the drought was followed by the "violent seizing" which brought on the conquest of Mecca. Bukharee has the following reference to it: "When the Quraish opposed the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) he prayed that they might be overtaken by years of drought like the years of Joseph (i.e. seven years); so famine and distress overtook them until they ate bones and dead bodies, and a man used to look to heaven, and he saw between him and it something like smoke on account of hard affliction."

will remove the chastisement a little, (but) you will return
(to evil). 16 On the day when We will seize (them) with
the most violent seizing; surely We will inflict retribu-
tion.[1] 17 And certainly We tried before them the people
of Pharaoh, and there came to them a noble apostle,
18 Saying: Deliver to me the servants of God; I am a
faithful apostle to you, 19 And do not exalt yourselves
against God; for I will bring to you a clear authority:
20 And I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord that
you should slay me: 21 And if you do not believe in me,
then leave me alone. 22 And he called upon his Lord:
These are a guilty people. 23 Go forth with My servants
by night; surely you will be pursued: 24 And leave the
sea intervening,[2] they are a host that shall be drowned.
25 How many of the gardens and fountains have they
left! 26 And cornfields and noble places! 27 And goodly
things wherein they rejoiced! 28 Thus (it was), and We
gave them as a heritage to another people. 29 So the
heaven and the earth did not weep for them, nor were they
respited.

SECTION 2.—The Wicked shall be punished

30 And We delivered the children of Israel from the
abasing chastisement, 31 From Pharaoh; for he was
haughty, (and) one of the extravagant. 32 And, having
knowledge, We chose them above the nations. 33 And
We gave them of the communications wherein was clear
blessing. 34 Surely these do say: 35 There is naught
but our first death and we shall not be raised again:
36 Bring our fathers (back), if you are truthful. 37 Are
they better or the people of Tubba[3] and those before
them? We destroyed them, for they were guilty. 38 And
We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is
between them in sport. 39 We did not create them both
but with the truth, but most of them do not know. 40 The
day of separation is their appointed term, of all of them;

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[1] The prophecy here seems to refer to the constant defeats in battles that were to be suffered by the Quraish, beginning with the battle of Badr and resulting in the final overthrow of their power by the seizure of Mecca. Ibn-i-Masud says that by *violent seizing* is meant the *day of Badr*.

[2] *Rahw*, translated here as *intervening*, also signifies *calm*; the meaning being that there was no storm in the sea when it was left by the Israelites.

[3] The kings of the Hamyarites bore the title Tubba.

41 The day on which a friend shall not avail (his) friend
aught, nor shall they be helped, 42 Save those on whom
God shall have mercy ; for He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

SECTION 3.—The Good are rewarded

43 The tree of the *Zaqqum*, 44 Is the food of the sinful,
45 Like dregs of oil ; it shall boil in (their) bellies, 46 Like
the boiling of hot water. 47 Seize him, then drag him
down into the middle of the hell ; 48 Then pour above his
head of the torment of the boiling water : 49 Taste ; thou
forsooth art the mighty, the honourable. 50 This is what
you disputed about. 51 The righteous are in a secure
place, 52 In gardens and springs ; 53 They shall wear of
fine and thick silk, (sitting) face to face ; 54 Thus (shall
it be), and We will unite them with pure, beautiful ones.
55 They shall call therein for every fruit in security;
56 They shall not taste therein death except the first
death, and He will save them from the chastisement of the
hell, 57 A grace from thy Lord ; this is the great achieve-
ment. 58 So have We made it easy in thy tongue that
they may be mindful. 59 Therefore wait ; they too are
waiting.

CHAPTER 45

AL-JÂSIYAH: THE KNEELING

(*Mecca—4 sections ; 37 verses*)

THIS is the sixth chapter of the *Há mím* group. Its title is taken from v. 28, which speaks of every nation being brought to its *knees* before the mighty power of God, according to its deserving. The first two sections speak of revelation. The revelation is from a Mighty, Wise God, and there are many signs of its truth, but the unbelievers still reject it. The signs of its truth are mentioned in the second section. The third section refers to judgment and the unbelievers' denial of it, because of the hardness of their hearts. The fourth speaks of the doom of the unbelievers and of the substitution of the believers in their place.

SECTION 1.—Denial of Revelation

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God! 2 The revelation of the Book
is from God, the Mighty, the Wise. 3 Surely in the heavens
and the earth there are signs for the believers. 4 And in

your (own) creation and in what He spreads abroad of
animals there are signs for a people that are sure ; 5 And
(in) the variation of the night and the day, and (in) what
God sends down of sustenance from the cloud, then gives
life thereby to the earth after its death, and (in) the changing
of the winds, there are signs for a people who understand.
6 These are the communications of God which We recite
to thee with truth ; but in what announcement would
they believe after God and His communications ? 7 Woe
to every sinful liar, 8 Who hears the communications of
God recited to him, then persists proudly as though he had
not heard them ; so announce to him a painful chastisement.
9 And when he comes to know of any of Our communica-
tions, he takes it for a jest ; these it is that shall have
abasing chastisement. 10 Before them is hell, and there
shall not avail them aught of what they earned, nor those
whom they took for guardians besides God, and they shall
have a grievous chastisement. 11 This is guidance ; and
(as for) those who disbelieve in the communications of
their God, they shall have a painful chastisement on account
of uncleanness.

SECTION 2.—**Truth of Revelation of Quran**

12 God is He Who made subservient to you the sea that
the ships may run therein by His command, and that you
may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks.
13 And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is
in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from
Himself ; indeed there are signs in this for a people who
reflect. 14 Say to those who believe (that) they forgive
those who do not fear the days of God [1] that He may
reward a people for what they earn. 15 Whoever does
good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is
against himself ; then you shall be brought back to your
Lord. 16 And We gave the Book and the wisdom and
the prophecy to the children of Israel, and We gave them
of the goodly things, and We made them excel the nations.
17 And We gave them clear arguments in the affair,[2] but

[1] The days of God are the contests in which the righteous shall be made successful.

[2] The affair or *amr* here signifies *the prophethood of Muhammad*, regarding which the Israelites were given the clearest prophecies. The next verse makes it clear.

they did not differ until after knowledge had come to them out of envy among themselves; thy Lord will judge between them on the day of resurrection concerning that wherein they differed. 18 Then We have made thee follow a course in the affair, therefore follow it, and do not follow the low desires of those who do not know. 19 They shall not avail thee in the least against God; and the unjust are friends of each other, and God is the guardian of those who guard (against evil). 20 These are clear proofs for men, and a guidance and a mercy for a people who are sure. 21 Nay! do those who have wrought evil deeds think that We will make them like those who believe and do good—that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil it is that they judge.

SECTION 3.—Denial of Judgment

22 And God created the heavens and the earth with truth and that every soul may be rewarded for what it has earned and they shall not be wronged. 23 Hast thou considered him who takes his low desire for his god, and God has left him in error having knowledge, and has set a seal upon his ear and his heart and put a covering upon his eye. Who can then guide him after God? Will you not be mindful? 24 And they say: There is nothing but our life in this world; we live and die and nothing destroys us but time, and they have no knowledge of that; they only conjecture. 25 And when Our clear communications are recited to them, their argument is no other than that they say: Bring our fathers (back) if you are truthful. 26 Say: God gives you life, then He makes you die, then will He gather you to the day of resurrection wherein is no doubt, but most people do not know.

SECTION 4.—The Doom

27 And God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and on the day when the hour shall come to pass, on that day shall the triflers perish. 28 And thou shalt see every nation kneeling down; every nation shall be called to its book:[1] to-day you shall be rewarded for what

[1] The *book* signifies *the book of deeds*. That every nation shall have a book shows that nations are also judged according to their deeds; the

you did. 29 This is Our book that speaks against you
with justice; surely We wrote what you did. 30 Then as
to those who believed and did good, their Lord will make
them enter into His mercy; that is the manifest achieve-
ment. 31 And as to those who disbelieved: What!
were not My communications recited to you? But you
were proud and you were a guilty people. 32 And when it
was said, The promise of God is true, and as for the hour,
there is no doubt about it, you said: We do not know what
the hour is; we do not think (that it will come to pass)
save a passing thought, and we are not at all sure. 33 And
the evil (consequences) of what they did shall become
manifest to them and that which they mocked shall
encompass them. 34 And it shall be said: To-day We
forsake you as you neglected the meeting of this day of
yours and your abode is the fire, and there are not for you
any helpers: 35 That is because you took the communica-
tions of God for a jest and the life of this world deceived
you. So on that day they shall not be brought forth
from it, nor shall they be granted goodwill. 36 And to
God is due (all) praise, the Lord of the heavens and the
Lord of the earth, the Lord of the worlds. 37 And to
Him belongs greatness in the heavens and the earth, and
He is the Mighty, the Wise.

CHAPTER 46

AL-AHQÂF: THE SANDHILLS

(*Mecca*—4 *sections*; 35 *verses*)

THIS is the last chapter of the *Há mím* group, and is entitled *The Sandhills*, the title being taken from the tracts of sand which contributed to the destruction of the tribe of Ad (v. 21). The fact is mentioned to warn the Arabs that when the fate of a nation is sealed, it may be brought about by sea, as in the case of Pharaoh and his hosts, or in sand, as in the case of the tribe of Ad.

The chapter continues the subject-matter of the last chapter, dealing with the truth of revelation in the first section and with the witness of truth in the second. The last two sections, after referring to the fate of Ad, contain a warning for those who reject the truth.

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law that applies to the case of individuals also applies to nations. Nations are judged in this life, therefore the day on which every nation is called to its book is the day of its doom.

PART XXVI

SECTION 1.—Truth of Revelation

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Praised, Glorious God! 2 The revelation of the Book is from God, the Mighty, the Wise. 3 We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them save with truth and (for) an appointed term; and those who disbelieve turn aside from what they are warned of. 4 Say: Have you considered what you call upon besides God? Show me what they have created of the earth, or have they a share in the heavens? Bring me a book before this or traces of knowledge, if you are truthful. 5 And who is in greater error than he who calls besides God upon those that will not answer him till the day of resurrection and they are heedless of their call? 6 And when men are gathered together, they shall be their enemies, and shall be deniers of their worshipping (them). 7 And when Our clear communications are recited to them, those who disbelieve say with regard to the truth when it comes to them: This is clear enchantment. 8 Nay! they say: He has forged it. Say: If I have forged it, you do not control anything for me from God; He knows best what you utter concerning it; He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. 9 Say: I am not the first of the apostles,[1] and I do not know what will be done with me or with you; I do not follow anything but that which is revealed to me, and I am nothing but a plain warner. 10 Say: Have you considered if it is from God, and you disbelieve in it, and a witness from among the children of Israel has borne witness of one like him,[2] so he believed, while you are big with pride; truly God does not guide the unjust people.

SECTION 2.—Witness of Truth

11 And those who disbelieve say concerning those who believe: If it had been a good, they would not have gone ahead of us therein. And as they do not seek to be rightly

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[1] I.e. prophets had appeared before him, and he must be judged in the same manner as those before him were judged.

[2] The witness from among the children of Israel who bore witness of one *like him* is Moses; see Deut. 18 : 18, 19. V. 12 makes it clear.

directed thereby, they say: It is an old lie. 12 And
before it the book of Moses was a guide and a mercy; and
this is a Book verifying (it) in the Arabic language that
it may warn those who are unjust and (give) good news
to the doers of good. 13 Those who say, Our Lord is God,
then continue on the right way, they shall have no fear
nor shall they grieve. 14 These are the dwellers of the
garden, abiding therein: a reward for what they did.
15 And We have enjoined on man the doing of good to
his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and
with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of
him and the weaning of him was thirty months; until
when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years,
he says: My Lord! grant me that I may give thanks for
Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my
parents, and that I may do good which pleases Thee, and
do good to me in respect of my offspring; I turn to Thee,
and I am of those who submit. 16 These are they from
whom We accept the best of what they have done and pass
over their evil deeds, among the dwellers of the garden;
the promise of truth which they were promised. 17 And he
who says to his parents: Fie on you! do you threaten
me that I shall be brought forth when generations have
already passed away before me? And they both call
for God's aid: Woe to thee! believe, for the promise
of God is true. But he says: This is nothing but stories
of the ancients. 18 These are they against whom the
word has proved true among nations of the jinn and
the men that have passed away before them; surely
they are losers. 19 And for all are degrees according to
what they do, and that He may pay them back fully their
deeds and they shall not be wronged. 20 And on the
day when those who disbelieve shall be brought before the
fire: You did away with your good things in your life
of the world and you enjoyed them for a while, so to-day
you shall be rewarded with the chastisement of abasement
because you were unjustly proud in the land and because
you transgressed.

SECTION 3.—**The Fate of Ad**

21 And mention the brother of Ad; when he warned
his people in the sandy plains,—and indeed warners came

before him and after him—saying : Serve none but God ;
I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day. 22 They
said : Hast thou come to us to turn us away from our
gods ? So bring us what thou threatenest us with, if thou
art of the truthful ones. 23 He said : The knowledge
is only with God, and I deliver to you the message with
which I am sent, but I see you are a people who are ignorant.
24 And when they saw it as a cloud appearing in the sky
advancing towards their valleys, they said : This is a
cloud which will give us rain. Nay ! it is what you sought
to hasten on, a blast of wind in which is a painful chastise-
ment, 25 Destroying every thing by the command of its
Lord ; so they became such that naught could be seen
except their dwellings. Thus do We reward the guilty
people. 26 And certainly We had established them in
what We have not established you in, and We had given
them ears and eyes and hearts, but neither their ears,
nor their eyes, nor their hearts availed them aught, since
they denied the communications of God, and that which
they mocked encompassed them.

SECTION 4.—A Warning

27 And indeed We destroyed the towns which are
around you, and We repeat the communications that they
might turn. 28 Why did not then those help them whom
they took for gods besides God to draw (them) nigh (to
Him) ? Nay ! they were lost to them ; and this was their
lie and what they forged. 29 And when We turned towards
thee a party of the jinn who listened to the Quran ;[1] so
when they came to it, they said, Be silent ; when it was
finished, they turned back to their people warning (them).
30 They said : O our people, we have listened to a Book

[1] The jinn spoken of here not only believed in the Holy Quran but also became warners for their people, and they were therefore human beings, because the Holy Quran, and, in fact, every revealed book, was sent for men, not for any other class of beings. It was the sons of Adam who were told that apostles shall be sent to them (2 : 38 ; 7 : 35). Nowhere in the Holy Quran are we told that apostles were raised among, or for, jinn or beings that cannot be seen. And as shown in footnote on 6 : 129, the word *jinn* is applicable to men as well, and the *jinn* spoken of here seem to be some non-Arabs who came to hear the Prophet. Ibn-i-Masud tells us in a report that the Holy Prophet went to see them at a place outside Mecca accompanied by himself and that he talked with them. It is probable that this was a Jewish deputation, as the reference to Moses in the next verse shows.

revealed after Moses verifying that which is before it,
guiding to the truth and to a right path: 31 O our people!
accept the Divine caller and believe in Him, He will forgive
you of your faults and protect you from a painful chastise-
ment. 32 And whoever does not accept the Divine
caller, he shall not escape in the earth and he shall not have
guardians besides Him; these are in manifest error.
33 Have they not considered that God, Who created the
heavens and the earth and was not tired by their creation,
is able to give life to the dead? Aye! He has power
over all things. 34 And on the day when those who
disbelieve, shall be brought before the fire: Is it not
true? They shall say: Aye! by our Lord! He will
say: Then taste the chastisement, because you dis-
believed. 35 So bear up patiently as did the apostles
endowed with constancy bear up with patience, and do not
seek to hasten for them (their doom). On the day that
they shall see what they are promised they shall be as
if they had not tarried save an hour of the day. A sufficient
exposition! Shall any be destroyed save the transgressing
people?

CHAPTER 47

MUHAMMAD

(*Medina—4 sections; 38 verses*)

THIS chapter is entitled *Muhammad*, and foretells the material improvement in the condition of those who believed in the Holy Prophet Muhammad. They were in a very helpless condition at the time of its revelation, having fled from their homes for the safety of their lives, and being threatened by a powerful enemy in their new home. The overthrow of the power of that enemy was a necessary preliminary to the betterment of the condition of the Muslims, and this very circumstance gives us the key to the connection of this chapter with the concluding one of the last group. In that chapter we have only a repeated warning of the impending doom of the opponents, while we are clearly told herein what form that punishment will take. This chapter and the two that follow all belong to Medina revelation, but to three different periods, viz., the early, the middle and the last Medina period.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Opening with the statement that the exertions of those who prevent people from accepting the truth shall be utterly fruitless, while the believers shall soon enjoy an improvement in their condition, it states that this altered condition shall be accomplished by wars, and proceeds to

give a direction regarding prisoners of war. The second section is mainly devoted to the same subject, and further states that Mecca shall be subjugated, the unbelievers shall be brought low, and the believers shall be triumphant. The third and the fourth sections refer to those who regarded this, the most righteous war in history, as a calamity, and who therefore, assuming an attitude of hypocrisy, slowly returned to unbelief. In concluding, it also exhorts the Muslims to exert themselves to their utmost in the cause of truth, for if they failed, another people would be raised to supplant them.

The revelation of this chapter undoubtedly belongs to a period when war with the Meccans had not yet begun, but when circum stances had arisen which showed war to be inevitable. It was probably revealed in the first year of the Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Opponents shall perish in Wars

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Those who disbelieve and turn away from God's
way, He shall render their works ineffective. 2 And those
who believe and do good, and believe in what has been
revealed to Muhammad, and it is the very truth from their
Lord, He will remove their evil from them and improve
their condition.[1] 3 That is because those who disbelieve
follow falsehood, and those who believe follow the truth
from their Lord; thus does God set forth to men their
examples. 4 So when you meet the disbelievers in battle,
smite the necks until when you have overcome them, make
(them) prisoners, and afterwards either set them free as
a favour or let them ransom (themselves) until the war lays
down its weapons.[2] That (shall be so); and if God had
pleased, He would have inflicted retribution on them, but
that He may try some of you by means of others; and (as

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[1] The clear prophecies of the first and second verses were announced at a time when the enemy had succeeded in expelling the Muslims from their homes at Mecca and the Holy Prophet had to fly for his very life.

[2] This passage mentions the only case in which prisoners of war can be taken, and thus condemns the practice of slavery, according to which men could be seized everywhere and sold into slavery. Prisoners of war can only be taken after meeting an enemy in regular battle, and even in that case they must be set free, either as a favour or after taking ransom. It was the former of these alternatives that the Holy Prophet adopted in most cases; for instance, in the case of the prisoners of the Bani Mustaliq, in which a hundred families were set at liberty, and in the case of Hawazin, in which fully six thousand prisoners of war were released merely as an act of favour. In the case of the seventy prisoners taken at Badr alone there is mention of redemption having been taken.

for) those who are slain in the way of God, He will by no
means allow their deeds to perish. 5 He will guide them
and improve their condition, 6 And cause them to enter
the garden which He has made known to them. 7 O you
who believe! if you help (the cause of) God, He will help
you and make firm your feet. 8 And for those who
disbelieve, there is destruction, and He has made their
deeds ineffective. 9 That is because they hated what
God revealed, so He rendered their deeds null. 10 Have
they not journeyed in the land and seen what was the end
of those before them: God brought down destruction
upon them, and the unbelievers shall have the like of it.
11 That is because God is the Protector of those who
believe, and because the unbelievers shall have no
protector for them.

SECTION 2.—**Oppressors shall be brought low**

12 Truly God will make those who believe and do
good enter gardens in which rivers flow; and those who
disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as the beasts eat, and
the fire is their abode. 13 And how many a town which
was far more powerful than the town of thine which has
driven thee out: We destroyed them so there was no
helper for them. 14 What! is he who has a clear argument
from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work is made
fairseeming; and they follow their low desires. 15 A
parable of the garden which those guarding (against evil)
are promised: Therein are rivers of water that does not
alter, and rivers of milk the taste whereof does not change,
and rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers
of honey clarified; and for them therein are all fruits and
protection from their Lord.[1] (Are these) like those who
abide in the fire and who are made to drink boiling water
so it rends their bowels asunder? 16 And there are

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[1] The description given does not mention the actual blessings of paradise, for they are blessings "which no eye has seen, nor has any ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them," but it is only a parable, and an example which shows what they are like. There are rivers of water which is the source of life, and rivers of milk which gives strength, and rivers of wine which cheers up, and rivers of honey which cures. It should be noted that *maghfirat*, or Divine protection, is also one of the blessings of paradise.

those of them who seek to listen to thee, until when they go forth from thee, they say to those who have been given the knowledge: What was it that he said just now? These are they upon whose hearts God has set a seal and they follow their low desires. 17 And (as for) those who follow the right direction, He shall increase them in guidance and give them (the reward of) their guarding (against evil). 18 Do they wait for aught but the hour that it should come to them all of a sudden? Now indeed the tokens of it have (already) come, but how shall they have their reminder when it comes on them? [1] 19 So know that there is nothing that deserves to be worshipped but God, and ask protection for thy fault and for the believing men and the believing women; [2] and God knows the place of your returning and the place of your abiding.

SECTION 3.—The Weak-hearted Ones

20 And those who believe say: Why has not a chapter been revealed? [3] But when a decisive chapter is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein, thou seest those in whose hearts is a disease look to thee with the look of one fainting because of death. Woe to them! 21 Obedience and a good word (was proper); but when the affair becomes settled, then if they remain true to God it would be better for them. 22 But if you held command, you were sure to make mischief in the land and cut off the ties of kinship. 23 These it is whom God has cursed, and He has made them deaf and blinded their eyes. 24 Do they not reflect on the Quran? Nay, on the hearts are their locks. 25 (As

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[1] By the *hour* is to be understood the hour of their doom, or the overthrow of their power, which is clearly spoken of in the previous verses. Tokens of it had already appeared, for they had seen how Islam was daily advancing, and how all their efforts to check its progress had ended in failure.

[2] See note on 40 : 55 for *thy fault* which means the faults to which the Prophet as a mortal was liable. It should also be noted that the word *zanb* has a very wide significance and does not necessarily imply *sin*. On the other hand, any fault or any shortcoming of human nature is a *zanb*.

[3] The Muslims had been persecuted beyond all measure; they had been oppressed, slain, and turned out of their houses. Hence they naturally desired that they should be allowed to defend themselves. By *a chapter* is meant a revelation allowing them to fight in self-defence.

for) those who turn on their backs after that guidance has
become manifest to them, the devil has made it a light
matter to them; and He gives them respite. 26 That is
because they say to those who hate what God has revealed,
We will obey you in some of the affairs; and God knows
their secrets. 27 But how will it be when the angels
cause them to die smiting their faces and their backs?
28 That is because they follow what is displeasing to God
and are averse to His pleasure, therefore He has made null
their deeds.

SECTION 4.—The Weak-hearted Ones

29 Or do those in whose hearts is a disease think that
God will not bring forth their spite? 30 And if We
please We would have made thee know them so that thou
wouldst have recognized them by their marks; and
certainly thou canst recognize them by the intent of (their)
speech; and God knows your deeds. 31 And We will try
you until We have known those among you who exert
themselves hard, and the patient, and made your case
manifest. 32 Those who disbelieve and turn away from
God's way and oppose the Apostle after that guidance has
become clear to them cannot harm God in any way, and
He will make null their deeds. 33 O you who believe!
obey God and obey the Apostle, and do not make your
deeds of no effect. 34 Those who disbelieve and turn
away from God's way, then die while they are unbelievers,
God will by no means forgive them. 35 And be not slack
so as to cry for peace and you have the upper hand, and
God is with you, and He will not bring your deeds to
naught. 36 The life of this world is only idle sport and
play, and if you believe and guard (against evil), He will
give you your rewards, and will not ask of you your posses-
sions. 37 If He should ask you for them and urge you, you
will be niggardly, and He will bring forth your malice.
38 Behold! you are those who are called upon to spend in
God's way, but among you are those who are niggardly,
and whoever is niggardly is niggardly against his own
soul; and God is Self-sufficient and you have need (of Him);
and if you turn back He will bring in your place another
people, then they will not be like you.

CHAPTER 48

AL-FAT-H : THE VICTORY

(Medina—4 sections ; 29 verses)

THIS chapter is entitled *The Victory*, a very appropriate name, because it deals with the conquests of Islam, from the great moral victory gained at Hudaibiyya mentioned in the opening verse, to the final triumph of Islam over all other religions of the world (v. 28). The word *fat-h* itself occurs several times in this chapter. It is remarkable that although the Muslims had already been victorious in several battles, not one of those victories but a truce, apparently disadvantageous to the Muslims, is made the basis of the triumphant career of Islam. There is no doubt an indication in this that though war was forced on Islam, and the Muslims had been victorious, yet its real triumph lay in its moral conquests ; the first of these after the Flight being the apparent disadvantage, but the real moral conquest, gained at Hudaibiyya. There was no fighting there, but a truce was concluded which, although not allowing the Muslims to retain any Muslim refugee from Mecca, nevertheless opened the way for people, by laying aside hostilities, to reflect on the beauties of Islam. The truce at Hudaibiyya was thus a moral victory, and, regarded, as it is, as the basis of the future conquests of Islam, is a clear indication that moral conquests were looked upon as the real conquests of Islam. Even the importance of the conquest of Mecca lies in the conquest of hearts which the Holy Prophet made by showing an example of forgiveness unparalleled in the history of the human race.

The connection of this chapter with the last is clear. Whilst the last chapter speaks of the overthrow of the opponents of Islam in wars, and of the betterment of the condition of the Muslims, here we are told how that improved condition in Muslim affairs was accomplished. Victory in battle was, no doubt, the immediate cause of the overthrow of an enemy who wished to destroy Islam by physical force, but the real success of Islam lay in its moral conquests.

As regards the date of revelation of this chapter, there can be no two opinions. We have Umar's testimony on record that the Holy Prophet recited it for the first time when returning from Hudaibiyya, and hence its revelation belongs to the sixth year of the Hejira.

The chapter opens by declaring the Hudaibiyya truce to be a real victory, and after referring to the disappointment of the hypocrites and the idolaters, concludes with a reference to the aid and allegiance which the faithful rendered to the Holy Prophet. The second section deals with the false excuses of the hypocrites, and separates them from the faithful by not allowing them to join the Muslims in their expeditions. The third section prophesies more victories in battles—that at Khaibar and the conquest of Mecca being clearly hinted at. The fourth section brings the chapter to a close by making the important announcement that Islam shall be made triumphant over all other religions of the world.

SECTION 1.—Hudaibiyya Truce was a Victory

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 We have given to thee a clear victory,[1] 2 That God may rectify for thee that which has gone before of the faults attributed to thee and that which remains behind,[2] and complete His favour to thee and guide thee on a right way,[3] 3 And that God might help thee with a mighty help. 4 He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might have more of faith added to their faith—and God's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and God is Knowing, Wise—5 That He may cause the believing men and the believing women to enter gardens in which rivers flow to abide therein and remove from them their evil; and that is a grand achievement with God; 6 And (that) He may chastise the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the polytheistic men and the polytheistic women, the entertainers of evil thoughts about God. On them is the evil turn, and God is wroth with them and has cursed them

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[1] According to Bukhari, the victory referred to here is no other than that gained by the truce at Hudaibiyya. The fact that there was no actual fighting at Hudaibiyya has led many to think that the words contain a prophecy about the conquest of Mecca, which, however, is referred to later on in the third section of this chapter. The truce at Hudaibiyya was a real victory for the Muslims, because it opened the way for the propagation of Islam among the unbelievers, and by putting a stop to hostilities gave the opponents an occasion to ponder over the merits of the religion which they had hitherto in vain tried to destroy by the sword.

[2] A state of hostilities having continued for a long time, the people had never had occasion to reflect on the beauties of Islam, and only a dark picture of it was present to their minds. Hence *zanbi-ka* here signifies the shortcomings and failures which the opponents attributed to the Prophet, to the removal of which the truce at Hudaibiyya had opened the way, for it was after that that the brighter side of the picture was brought before their eyes. See 5 : 29, where *ismí*, lit. *my sin*, really signifies *the sin committed against me*, and similarly *shurakái*, lit. *my associates*, always signifies *the associates attributed to me*. And *ghafr* means *protecting* as well as *rectifying*. There is also a reference here to *that which remains behind*. By this is meant the *later carpings* of the enemies of Islam. As I have stated, this chapter deals not only with the immediate triumph of Islam, but prophesies also its ultimate triumph over all religions. Hence there is a promise here that not only those misunderstandings will be corrected which already exist, but also those that *remain behind*, and will be spread at a later date by the enemies of Islam, will be dispelled, and Islam will thus shine in its full lustre not only in Arabia but in the whole of the world.

[3] The completion of favours was accomplished by the spread of Islam, and the guiding on the right way signified the right way to success.

and prepared hell for them and evil is the resort. 7 And God's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth; and God is Mighty, Wise. 8 We have sent thee as a witness and as a bearer of good news and as a warner, 9 That you may believe in God and His Apostle and may aid him and revere him; and (that) you may declare His glory, morning and evening. 10 Those who swear allegiance to thee do but swear allegiance to God; the hand of God is above their hands. Therefore whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to the injury of his own soul, and whoever fulfils what he has covenanted with God, He will grant him a mighty reward.[1]

SECTION 2.—The Defaulters

11 Those of the dwellers of the desert who were left behind will say to thee: Our property and our families kept us busy, so ask forgiveness for us. They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: Who can control anything for you from God if He intends to do you harm or if He intends to do you good; nay! God is Aware of what you do. 12 Nay! you rather thought that the Apostle and the believers would not return to their families ever, and that was made fairseeming to your hearts and you thought an evil thought and you were a people doomed to perish. 13 And whoever does not believe in God and His Apostle, then surely We have prepared burning fire for the unbelievers. 14 And God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases, and God is Forgiving, Merciful. 15 Those who are left behind will say when you set forth for the gaining of acquisitions: Allow us (that) we may follow you. They desire to change the word of God. Say: By no means shall you follow us; thus did God

[1] The swearing of allegiance referred to here took place before the truce was concluded. The Holy Prophet had started with his men with the object of performing a pilgrimage, but when he reached Hudaibiyya, the Meccans opposed his entry into Mecca. Thereupon the companions of the Holy Prophet swore allegiance to him (under a tree as stated in v. 18), that they would defend him at all costs and die fighting at his side. The necessity for this seems to have arisen from the fact that the Quraish advanced to fight the Muslims, who had started unprepared, because they intended only to perform the pilgrimage. The verse, moreover, shows that *baiat*, or the swearing of allegiance, becomes a necessity when some great end is in view.

say before.[1] But they will say: Nay! you are jealous
of us. Nay! they do not understand but a little. 16 Say
to those of the dwellers of the desert who were left behind:
You shall soon be invited (to fight) against a people
possessing mighty prowess; you will fight against them
until they submit; then if you obey, God will grant you
a good reward; and if you turn back as you turned back
before, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement.[2]
17 There is no harm in the blind, nor is there any harm
in the lame, nor is there any harm in the sick (not going
forth); and whoever obeys God and His Apostle, He will
cause him to enter gardens in which rivers flow, and
whoever turns back, He will chastise him with a painful
chastisement.

SECTION 3.—More Victories for Islam

18 Certainly God was well pleased with the believers
when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, and
He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down
tranquillity on them and rewarded them with a near
victory,[3] 19 And many acquisitions which they will take;
and God is Mighty, Wise.[4] 20 God promised you many
acquisitions which you will take, then He hastened on this
one for you and held back the hands of men from you,
and that it may be a sign for the believers and that He
may guide you on a right path; 21 And others which you
have not yet been able to achieve, God has surely encom-
passed them, and God has power over all things.[5] 22 And
if those who disbelieve fight with you, they would certainly

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[1] I.e. before they came with that request. The chapter was revealed on the way to Medina while these people came with their request after the Holy Prophet had reached Medina.

[2] The power of the Meccan enemy was now broken, as was proved by the advance on Mecca two years later. Hence the defaulters are told that they would be called on to join the forces of Islam against another powerful enemy. This refers prophetically to the wars against the Roman and Persian Empires in the time of the early Caliphs.

[3] The near victory prophesied here was obtained at Khaibar, soon after the return from Hudaibiyya.

[4] These acquisitions were the later conquests in the time of the Holy Prophet, among which the conquest of Mecca occupied the first place.

[5] This reference is to the great Muslim conquests under the successors of the Holy Prophet. The vanquishment of the enemy is plainly spoken of in the next verse.

turn (their) backs, then they would not find any protector or a helper. 23 Such has been the course of God that has indeed run before, and thou shalt not find a change in God's course. 24 And He it is Who held back their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Mecca after He had given you victory over them; and God sees what you do. 25 It is they who disbelieved and turned you away from the Sacred Mosque and (turned off) the offering withheld from arriving at its destined place; and were it not for the believing men and the believing women, whom, not having known, you might have trodden down, and thus some distress might have afflicted you on their account without knowledge—so that God may cause to enter into His mercy whomsoever He pleases; had they been widely separated one from another, We would have chastised those who disbelieved from among them with a painful chastisement. 26 When those who disbelieved harboured in their hearts (feelings of) disdain, the disdain of (the days of) ignorance, but God sent down His tranquillity on His Apostle and on the believers and made them keep the word of righteousness, and they were entitled to it and worthy of it; and God is Cognizant of all things.[1]

SECTION 4.—**Ultimate Triumph of Islam**

27 God had shown to His Apostle the vision with truth[2] (that) you shall surely enter the Sacred Mosque, if God

[1] The Quraish gave vent to feelings of disdain by not allowing the Muslims to perform a pilgrimage; while the word of *taqwa* or righteousness which the Muslims adhered to was the acceptance of a truce to end war, though the conditions of the truce were humiliating for them. The chief terms of the agreement were: (1) That the Muslims should return without performing a pilgrimage. (2) That they should be allowed to perform a pilgrimage next year, but should not stay for more than three days. (3) That if an unbeliever, being converted, went over to the Muslims he should be returned, but if a Muslim went over to the unbelievers he should not be given back to the Muslims. The last term of the agreement was specially dissatisfying to the Muslims; but it shows the strong conviction which the Holy Prophet had in the truth of Islam, for he was confident that none of his companions would go over to unbelief and join the Quraish; and also that those who became converts to Islam would not desert it on account of persecution, or because they were not given shelter by the Muslims. And thus it happened that the converts to Islam from among the Meccans, not being allowed to settle at Medina, formed an independent colony of their own, proving thereby the genuineness of their convictions and the strength of their faith.

[2] The Holy Prophet's journey to Mecca to perform a pilgrimage with nearly 1,500 of his companions was undertaken on the basis of the vision

please, in security, (some) having their heads shaved and (others) having their hair cut; you shall not fear; but He knew what you did not know, so He brought about a near victory before that. 28 He it is Who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and God is enough for a witness.[1] 29 Muhammad is the Apostle of God and those with him are firm against the unbelievers,[2] compassionate among themselves; thou wilt see them bowing down, prostrating themselves; seeking grace from God and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah and their description in the Gospel; like as seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them. God has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward.

CHAPTER 49

AL-HUJURÂT: THE CHAMBERS

(Medina—2 sections; 18 verses)

THIS chapter takes its title from v. 4, which enjoins the Muslims not to call out to the Prophet from behind the private *chambers*. As this chapter was revealed when large masses began to enter

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stated here. In a vision, he had seen himself and his companions performing a pilgrimage. Convinced of the truth of his vision, he set out with the object of performing a pilgrimage. The Meccans, however, opposed him at Hudaibiyya, and a truce was there arranged according to which the Holy Prophet had to return without performing a pilgrimage. The truth of the vision is therefore asserted here. It is made clear that the Prophet's return did not falsify the vision which had to be, and was, fulfilled in the next year. Shaving the heads or having the hair cut refers to the full performance of all the ceremonies of pilgrimage which end with this act.

[1] This prophecy of the prevalence of Islam over all other religions is a prophecy which extends into the distant future. Arabia had seen its fulfilment in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. The prevalence of Islam is not, however, synonymous with the political supremacy of its adherents at all times, nor does the prophecy signify that other religions would at any time entirely disappear; it only indicates that the superiority of the religion of Islam to all other religions will at last be established, and Islam will be the religion of the majority of the nations of the earth. No other scripture prophesies the triumph of the religion it preaches in such unmistakable terms.

[2] *Ashiddâ* is the plural of *shadîd*, which means ordinarily *firm, strong, powerful.*

Islam and deputation after deputation came to Medina, it was necessary to teach these masses good manners as well as good morals, and here we are told to respect not only the privacy of the Holy Prophet, but also the privacy of every individual Muslim. The Holy Prophet was not only the spiritual head of a people : he had also to direct his people in their religious and temporal affairs. He had to teach them manners as well as morals ; to decide their cases and to make laws for them ; to lead them to prayer to bow before God, and into the field to fight against a powerful enemy ; and, therefore, it was necessary that the new converts to Islam should appreciate the value of his time.

The chapter was revealed at Medina in the year 9 A.H. The opening verses are unanimously referred to the time of the visit of the deputation of Bani Tamim. The previous chapter speaks of victories for the Muslims, and victory brings ease, this chapter therefore denounces the vices of a civilized society living in ease and comfort. The first five verses teach what manners must be observed towards the Holy Prophet, the next three require all matters of importance to be referred to him, and the section is concluded with a statement requiring the Muslims to make peace between two Muslim parties who fight with each other. The second section teaches the Muslims some of the social virtues, and inculcates respect for each other, and lays down the foundation of the vast brotherhood of Islam, a brotherhood which is not based on the distinctions of tribes and families, but on piety and righteousness, so that the most righteous shall be the most respected.

SECTION 1.—Respect for the Prophet

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O you who believe ! be not forward in the presence
of God and His Apostle,[1] and be careful of (your duty to)
God ; for God is Hearing, Knowing. 2 O you who
believe ! do not raise your voices above the voice of the
Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud
to one another, lest your deeds become null while you do
not perceive.[2] 3 Those who lower their voices before
God's Apostle are they whose hearts God has proved for
righteousness ; they shall have forgiveness and a great
reward. 4 They who call out to thee from behind the
private chambers have most of them no sense. 5 And if
they wait patiently until thou come out to them, it would be
better for them, and God is Forgiving, Merciful. 6 O you

[1] The *presence of God* means the presence of His commandments. The words imply the utmost obedience.

[2] A loud voice, when there is no necessity for it, is expressive of arrogance or resentment.

who believe ! if an unrighteous man comes to you with
a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in
ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done. 7 And
know that among you is God's Apostle ; should he obey
you in many a matter, you would fall into distress, but
God has endeared the faith to you and has made it seemly
in your hearts, and He has made unbelief and transgression
and disobedience hateful to you ; these it is that are the
followers of a right way, 8 By grace from God and as a
favour ; and God is Knowing, Wise. 9 And if two parties
of the believers quarrel, make peace between them ; but
if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight
that which acts wrongfully until it returns to God's
command ; then if it returns, make peace between them
with justice and act equitably ; for God loves those who
act equitably.[1] 10 The believers are but brethren,
therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful
of (your duty to) God that mercy may be had on you.

SECTION 2.—Respect for each other

11 O you who believe ! let not (one) people laugh at
(another) people, perchance they may be better than they ;
nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they
may be better than they ; and do not find fault with your
people nor call one another by nicknames ; evil is a bad
name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is
that are the unjust.[2] 12 O you who believe ! avoid most
of suspicion, for suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do
not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one
of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother ? You
abhor it. And be careful of (your duty to) God, for God
is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. 13 O you men !
We have created you of a male and a female, and made
you tribes and families that you may know each other ;
the most honourable of you with God is the one among

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[1] The verse requires the Muslims not to be indifferent when one party of them quarrels with another. In such cases they must bring every kind of pressure within their reach to bear upon the party in error.

[2] This verse and those that follow deal with some of the evils which are most rampant in civilized society, and which corrupt the society to its core. These evils mostly arise with wealth, for, living in ease, people are mostly concerned in seeking each other's faults, and thus mutual hatred takes the place of brotherly love and friendly concord.

you most careful (of his duty); surely God is Knowing,
Aware.[1] 14 The dwellers of the desert say: We believe.
Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith
has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey God
and His Apostle, He will not diminish aught of your deeds;
for God is Forgiving, Merciful. 15 The believers are those
only who believe in God and His Apostle, then they doubt
not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in
the way of God; they are the truthful ones. 16 Say: Do
you apprise God of your religion, and God knows what is
in the heavens and what is in the earth; and God is
Cognizant of all things. 17 They think that they lay thee
under an obligation by becoming Muslims. Say: Lay me
not under obligation by your Islam: rather God lays you
under an obligation by guiding you to the faith if you are
truthful. 18 God knows the unseen things of the heavens
and the earth; and God sees what you do.

CHAPTER 50

QÁF

(*Mecca—3 sections; 45 verses*)

THIS chapter, which is entitled the *Qáf*, from its initial letter calling attention to the greatness of the power of the Divine Being, deals with the resurrection. The first section draws attention to the testimony of nature, and to there being a lesson in the fate of former people; the second shows that every action has a consequence, and these consequences shall be made manifest on the day of judgment; and the third states that the good and the bad must each receive their due, and that the judgment must be brought about in this life as well as in the hereafter.

The last chapter dealt with certain manners and morals which are the necessary concomitants of a state of ease. And, as it is this state of ease that contributes to neglect of the hereafter—and the judgment that overtakes men here as well as hereafter is entirely overlooked when this condition obtains—the connection of this chapter with the one preceding it is clear. The chapter is unanimously regarded as a Meccan revelation, and may be assigned to

[1] The principle of the brotherhood of man laid down here is on the broadest basis. The address here is not to believers as in the two previous verses, but to men in general, who are told that they are all, as it were, members of one family, and their divisions into nations, tribes, and families should not lead to estrangement from, but to a better knowledge of, each other. Superiority of one over another in this vast brotherhood does not depend on nationality, wealth, or rank, but on the careful observance of duty—moral greatness.

the early Meccan period. From here to the 56th chapter is again another group of Meccan chapters, all belonging to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—The Resurrection

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Almighty God and the glorious Quran![1] 2 Nay!
they wonder that there has come to them a warner from
among themselves, so the unbelievers say: This is a
wonderful thing: 3 What! when we are dead and have
become dust! That is a far (from probable) return.
4 We know indeed what the earth diminishes of them,
and with Us is a writing that preserves.[2] 5 Nay, they
rejected the truth when it came to them, so they are (now)
in a state of confusion. 6 Do they not look up to heaven
above them how We have made it and adorned it and
it has no gaps? 7 And the earth, We have spread it forth
and cast in it mountains and We have made to grow
therein of all beautiful kinds, 8 To give sight and as a
reminder to every servant who turns frequently (to God).
9 And We send down from the cloud water abounding in
good, then We cause to grow thereby gardens and grain
that is reaped, 10 And the tall palm-trees having spadices
closely set one above another, 11 A sustenance for the
servants, and We give life thereby to a dead land; thus
is the rising.[3] 12 (Others) before them rejected (prophets):
the people of Noah and the dwellers of Ar-Rass and Samood,
13 And Ad and Pharaoh and Lot's brethren, 14 And the
dwellers of the thicket, and the people of Tubba; all re-
jected the apostles, so My threat came to pass. 15 Were
We then fatigued with the first creation? Yet are they
in doubt with regard to a new creation.

SECTION 2.—In Resurrection Consequences are made manifest

16 And certainly We created man, and We know what
his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than

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[1] The letter *qáf* stands either for the name *Qádir*, or *Qadír*, of the Divine Being, meaning Almighty God. The verse is an expression of wonder at the unbelief of Meccans. The whole of the Quran is spoken of as one book even at this early period.

[2] This refers to a record of the consequences of one's actions; what is necessary for a life after death being preserved in its entirety.

[3] This is a reference to the regeneration to be effected by the Quran.

his life-vein. 17 When the two receivers receive, sitting
on the right and on the left. 18 He utters not a word
but there is by him a watcher at hand.[1] 19 And the
stupor of death will come in truth; that is what thou
wouldst shun. 20 And the trumpet shall be blown;
that is the day of the threatening. 21 And every soul
shall come, with it a driver and a witness.[2] 22 Certainly
thou wert heedless of it, but now We have removed from
thee thy veil, so thy sight to-day is sharp.[3] 23 And his
companion shall say: This is what is ready with me.
24 Do cast[4] into hell every ungrateful, rebellious one,
25 Forbidder of good, exceeder of limits, doubter, 26 Who
sets up another god with God; so do cast him into severe
chastisement. 27 His companion will say: Our Lord!
I did not lead him into inordinacy but he himself was in
a great error. 28 He will say: Do not quarrel in My
presence, and indeed I gave you the threatening before-
hand: 29 The word shall not be changed with Me, nor
am I in the least unjust to the servants.

SECTION 3.—The Resurrection

30 On the day that We will say to hell: Art thou
filled up? And it will say: Are there any more?[5]
31 And the garden shall be brought near to those who
guard (against evil), not far off: 32 This is what you were
promised, (it is) for every one who turns again and again
(to God), keeps (His limits); 33 Who fears the Beneficent
God in secret and comes with a penitent heart: 34 Enter
it in peace; that is the day of abiding. 35 They have

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[1] The three verses impress on man that all his deeds and words bear fruit, that nothing is said or done in vain. The *yamin*, or the right side, represents the *good*, and the *shimál*, or the left side, the *evil*.

[2] The *driver* signifies the *impeller to evil* or *the devil*, and the *witness* the *caller to truth* or *the angel*.

[3] This verse shows clearly that the consequences of evil deeds which remain hidden from the eye of man in this life shall be made manifest after death. This is the significance of the sight being made sharp, so that he shall then see what he is unable to see here. Such is hell, according to the teachings of the Quran, viz. the hidden consequences of evil deeds, when made manifest to a man, become his hell.

[4] The dual form in *alqiyá* is used to denote intensity.

[5] It should be remembered that the word *qaul* (saying) does not in Arabic always signify speaking with the tongue; it is very often used to express the condition of a thing, and so it is here. Just as the avarice of man knows no end, even so hell, which is a manifestation of that avarice.

therein what they wish and with Us is more yet. 36 And
how many a generation did We destroy before them who
were mightier in prowess than they, so they went about
and about in the lands. Is there a place of refuge?
37 Surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a
heart or he gives ear and is a witness. 38 And We created
the heavens and the earth and what is between them
in six periods and there touched Us not any fatigue.[1]
39 Therefore be patient of what they say, and celebrate
the praise of thy Lord before the rising of the sun and
before the setting. 40 And glorify Him in the night
and after the prayers. 41 And listen on the day when
the crier shall cry from a near place. 42 The day when
they shall hear the cry in truth; that is the day of coming
forth. 43 Surely We give life and cause to die, and to
Us is the eventual coming; 44 The day on which the earth
shall cleave asunder under them, they will make haste;
that is a gathering together easy to Us. 45 We know best
what they say, and thou art not one to compel them;
therefore remind him who fears My threat, by means of
the Quran.

CHAPTER 51

AZ-ZĀRIYĀT: THE SCATTERERS

(*Mecca*—3 *sections*; 60 *verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the mention of the *Scatterers* of truth in the first verse. It deals with the fact that the Meccans who reject the truth shall be judged, attention being drawn in the first section to the gradual advancement of truth, which was, quite naturally, daily gaining ground, and the whole section lays stress upon the certainty of the judgment; the second section, opening with the announcement of the birth of a son to Abraham (from whom descended the greatest of the prophets), deals with the fate of some previous nations who were judged because of their evil deeds; and the third again, after an exhortation to seek a refuge in God—because the service of God is the object of the creation of man—warns the Meccans that their turn of good fortune is about to be ended and they shall be judged even as those before them.

[1] The Bible says: "And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Gen. 2:2). The act of taking rest applies to one who is tired, and hence the Quran negatives any such idea in relation to God, Who does not stand in need of rest. The six stages of creation are mentioned in reference to the gradual spread of Islam.

While the last chapter dealt with the resurrection—the resurrection of the dead in a life after death as well as the resurrection of those who were spiritually dead—the one under consideration states that those who give the lie to this truth shall be judged according to their evil deeds. The chapter is undoubtedly an early Meccan revelation, and may without hesitation be assigned to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—**Falsehood is doomed**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider those scattering broad-cast, 2 Then those
bearing the load, 3 Then those running easily, 4 Then
those dividing the affair;[1] 5 What you are threatened
with is surely true; 6 And the judgment must surely
come about. 7 Consider the heaven full of ways;[2] 8 Surely
you are at variance with each other in what you say;
9 He is turned away from it who would be turned away.
10 Cursed be the liars 11 Who are in a gulf (of ignorance),
neglectful; 12 They ask: When is the day of judgment?
13 (It is) the day on which they shall be tried at the fire.
14 Taste your persecution;[3] this is what you would hasten
on. 15 The righteous shall be in gardens and fountains,
16 Taking what their Lord gives them; for they were
before that the doers of good. 17 They used to sleep but

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[1] It is generally considered that by the "broadcast scatterers" are meant the winds that raise up dust before the coming of a cloud. The bearers of the load are the clouds that carry rain; the easy runners are the winds that carry the clouds along, and the dividers are the winds that distribute the rain; attention being drawn in this description to a similar arrangement in the spiritual world by which truth gradually advances. But we may as well say that attention is herein drawn to more manifest facts, to the scattering of truth broadcast through the Holy Prophet and his faithful followers, which led to some bearing the load of it as if they had become pregnant with truth, while others ran easily towards the acceptance of truth. Others there were who are termed the dividers of the affair—those who are elsewhere called *muqtasimin*, i.e. *dividers*, because they divided the Quran into portions, admitting one part and rejecting another (15: 90). In the existence of these three classes, of which the first two increased day by day, while the third was gradually but slowly diminishing, there was a clear sign that the triumph of Islam would soon be established in the land.

[2] The description of heaven as *full of ways* is one which an ordinary Arab of 1,300 years ago could not give. It is, however, in perfect agreement with the most recent scientific discoveries, which show every star to be the centre about which planets revolve, even as our own sun is the centre around which the earth and several other planets revolve. The *ways* in the heavens are the orbits of the various planets.

[3] I.e. punishment was due to their persecution of the Muslims.

little in the night. 18 And in the morning they asked
forgiveness. 19 And in their property was a portion due
to him who begs and to him who is denied (good).[1] 20 And
in the earth there are signs for those who are sure, 21 And
in your own souls (too) ; will you not then see ? 22 And in
the heaven is your sustenance and what you are threatened
with.[2] 23 And by the Lord of the heavens and the earth !
it is surely the truth, just as you do speak.

SECTION 2.—**The Fate of previous Nations**

24 Has there come to thee information about the
honoured guests of Abraham ? 25 When they entered
upon him, they said : Peace. Peace, said he, a people
(who are) strangers. 26 Then he turned aside to his
family secretly and brought a fat (roasted) calf, 27 And he
brought it near them. He said : What ! will you not
eat ? 28 So he conceived in his mind a fear on account
of them. They said : Fear not. And they gave him the
good news of a boy possessing knowledge. 29 Then his
wife came up in great grief, and she struck her face and
said : An old barren woman ! 30 They said : Thus
says thy Lord, for He is the Wise, the Knowing.

PART XXVII

31 He said : What is your affair, O messengers!
32 They said : We are sent to a guilty people 33 That
We may send down upon them stones of clay, 34 Sent
forth from thy Lord for the extravagant. 35 And We
brought forth such as were therein of the believers.
36 But We did not find therein save a (single) house of
those who submitted. 37 And We left therein a sign for
those who fear the painful chastisement. 38 And (there
was a sign) in Moses, when We sent him to Pharaoh with
clear authority. 39 But he turned away with his forces
and said : An enchanter or a mad man. 40 So We
seized him and his hosts and hurled them into the sea, and
he was blameable. 41 And in Ad, when We sent upon

[1] The word *mahrûm* is understood by some to mean ***a poor man who does not beg***, and by others, ***one who has not the faculty of speech***, i.e. ***dumb animals***.

[2] That is, God has both a goodly sustenance and a punishment in store for you and He will give you what you deserve.

them the destructive wind. 42 It did not leave aught
on which it blew, but it made it like ashes. 43 And in
Samood, when it was said to them : Enjoy yourselves
for a while. 44 But they revolted against the command-
ment of their Lord, so the rumbling overtook them while
they saw. 45 So they were not able to rise up, nor
could they defend themselves ; 46 And the people of
Noah before, for they were a transgressing people.

SECTION 3.—The Meccans shall be judged

47 And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and
surely We are the maker of things ample. 48 And the
earth, We have made it a wide extent ; how well have
We spread (it) out. 49 And of every thing We have
created pairs that you may be mindful. 50 Therefore fly
to God, for I am a plain warner to you from Him. 51 And
do not set up with God another god : I am a plain warner
to you from Him. 52 Thus there did not come to those
before them an apostle but they said : An enchanter or
a mad man. 53 Have they charged each other with
this ? Nay ! they are an inordinate people. 54 Then
turn thy back upon them for thou art not to blame ;
55 And continue to remind, for the reminder profits the
believers. 56 And I have not created the jinn and the men
except that they should serve Me. 57 I do not desire
from them any sustenance and I do not desire that they
should feed Me. 58 Surely God is the Bestower of sus-
tenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong. 59 Surely those
who are unjust shall have a portion like the portion of their
companions, therefore let them not ask Me to hasten on.
60 And woe to those who disbelieve because of their day
which they are threatened with.

CHAPTER 52

AT-TŪR : THE MOUNTAIN

(*Mecca—2 sections ; 49 verses*)

THE *Mountain* to which Moses was called is referred to in the opening verse, thus indicating the similarity between the Holy Prophet and the Israelite lawgiver, because it was also on a mountain that the Holy Prophet received the call. The first section speaks of the

reward of the faithful, the second of the punishment of those who opposed the preaching of the truth and contrived plans to nip it in the bud. The judgment of the wicked in the last chapter called for an assurance of success for the faithful, which is the real object of this chapter. Its revelation belongs to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—**Success of the Faithful**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the Mountain, 2 And the written Book
3 In an outstretched vellum, 4 And the House that is
visited, 5 And the elevated canopy, 6 And the swollen
sea; 7 The chastisement of thy Lord will surely come to
pass;[1] 8 There shall be none to avert it; 9 On the day
when the heaven shall move from side to side, 10 And
the mountains shall pass away, passing away (altogether).
11 Woe on that day to those who reject (the truth),[2]
12 Those who sport entering into vain discourses. 13 The
day on which they shall be driven away to the fire of hell
with violence. 14 This is the fire which you used to give
the lie to. 15 Is it enchantment or do you not see?
16 Enter into it, then be patient or impatient, it is the
same to you; you shall be requited (for) what you did.
17 Those who guard (against evil) shall be in gardens and
bliss, 18 Rejoicing because of what their Lord gave them,
and their Lord saved them from the chastisement of the
burning fire. 19 Eat and drink pleasantly for what you
did, 20 Reclining on thrones set in lines, and We will

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[1] The first six verses draw attention to a set of parallel facts in the revelations of Moses and Muhammad, peace be upon them. The mount in the one case is Sinai, and in the other Hira; the Book stands for the Torah and the Quran; the House that is visited and the elevated canopy refer, on the one hand, to the tabernacle raised by Moses for the Israelites as a sacred place where they worshipped God and offered sacrifices, and on the other to the Sacred House at Mecca, which was to be the centre of the Muslims of all nations, all countries, and all ages, and where they were to offer sacrifices. The swollen sea represents the sea which brought destruction to Pharaoh and his hosts, while the Holy Prophet's enemies are told in the next verse that the punishment of their Lord would as surely overtake them on land as it overtook the enemies of Moses in the swollen sea.

[2] The most wonderful change that was to be brought about by the overthrow of a mighty nation, and the raising to the highest dignity of one who was considered a madman, is imaged in the words that the heavens shall move from side to side and the mountains (great men who opposed the Holy Prophet) shall pass away.

unite them to pure, beautiful ones.[1] 21 And those who
believe and their offspring follow them in faith—We will
unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish
to them aught of their work; every man is responsible
for what he shall have wrought. 22 And We will aid
them with fruit and flesh such as they desire. 23 They
shall pass therein from one to another a cup wherein there
shall be nothing vain nor any sin. 24 And round them
shall go boys of theirs as if they were hidden pearls. 25 And
some of them shall advance towards others questioning
each other, 26 Saying: We feared before on account of
our families; 27 But God has been gracious to us and
He has saved us from the chastisement of the hot wind:
28 We called upon Him before: He is the Benign, the
Merciful.

SECTION 2.—**Opponents are doomed**

29 And continue to remind, for by the grace of thy
Lord, thou art not a soothsayer, or a madman. 30 Or do
they say: A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of

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[1] The word *hûr* occurs four times in the Holy Quran, here and in 44 : 54, 55 : 72, and 56 : 22. It is a plural of *ahwar* (applied to a man) and of *haurá* (applied to a woman), signifying *one having eyes characterized by* the quality termed *hawar*, which means *intense whiteness of the white of the eye and intense blackness of the black thereof*. The other word, *'in*, is plural of *a'yan* (meaning *a man wide in the eyes*) and of *'ainá* (meaning *a woman beautiful and wide in the eye*). The latter word also signifies *a good* or *beautiful word*, or *saying*. It may be noted that whiteness is also a symbol of perfect and unsullied purity, and hence the two words *hûr* and *'in* really stand for *purity* and *beauty*; and therefore, instead of *white-eyed* and *large-eyed* ones, which words give a more literal significance of the original words, I adopt the words *pure* and *beautiful ones* as being more expressive of the true significance.

What are these *pure, beautiful ones* or *the white-eyed, large-eyed ones*? I have already explained that the Holy Quran does not speak of any conjugal relations being maintained in a physical sense in the life to come. Moreover, the Holy Quran clearly asserts that the blessings of paradise of which it speaks are only parables; see 47 : 15.

The question may still be asked, Why are these blessings described in words which apply to women? The fact is that the reward spoken of here is one having special reference to the *purity of character* and the *beautiful deeds* of the righteous, and it is *womanhood*, not *manhood*, that stands for a symbol of *purity* and *beauty*.

It may, however, be added that if the *pure* and *beautiful ones* of these verses are taken as signifying women, they are the wives of the faithful, as their offspring is spoken of in vv. 21 and 24, and their families (both wives and children) are mentioned in v. 26.

time? 31 Say: Wait, for I too with you am of those who
wait. 32 Nay! do their understandings bid them this?
Or are they an inordinate people? 33 Or do they say:
He has forged it? Nay! they do not believe. 34 Then
let them bring an announcement like it if they are truthful.
35 Or were they created for nothing, or are they the
creators? 36 Or did they create the heavens and the
earth? Nay! they have no certainty. 37 Or have they
the treasures of thy Lord with them? Or have they been
set in absolute authority? 38 Or have they the means
by which they listen? Then let their listener bring a clear
authority.[1] 39 Or has He daughters while you have
sons? 40 Or dost thou ask them for a reward, so that
they are overburdened by a debt? 41 Or have they (the
knowledge of) the unseen so that they write (it) down?
42 Or do they desire a war? But those who disbelieve
shall be the vanquished ones in war.[2] 43 Or have they
a god other than God? Glory be to God from what they
set up (with Him). 44 And if they should see a portion
of the heaven coming down, they would say: Piled up
clouds. 45 So leave them till they meet that day of
theirs wherein they shall be smitten with punishment:
46 The day on which their struggle shall not avail them
aught, nor shall they be helped. 47 And those who are
unjust shall surely have a chastisement besides that, but
most of them do not know.[3] 48 And wait patiently for
the judgment of thy Lord, for surely thou art before Our
eyes, and celebrate the praise of thy Lord when thou
risest; 49 And in the night, give Him glory too, and at
the setting of the stars.

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[1] This verse shows that the Arab astrologers and diviners pretended that they could listen to the secrets of the future, but their conjectures about the future failed to make any impression, as they did not turn out true.

[2] Mark the clear language in which wars are spoken of, and the consequent vanquishment of the unbelievers and the overthrow of their power at this early period.

[3] The two kinds of punishment with which the opponents were threatened are spoken of distinctly in this verse, viz. a punishment which was to overtake them in this very life and a punishment in the form of spiritual torment in another life.

CHAPTER 53

AN-NAJM: THE STAR

(Mecca—3 sections; 62 verses)

THE word *Star*, which gives its name to this chapter, occurs in the first verse. The last chapter dealt with the success of the faithful, and this speaks of the eminence to which the Holy Prophet must rise—thus the two chapters are connected. The first section states that the Prophet does not err, and therefore, being on the right way, must rise to the highest eminence to which man can rise; it denounces idol worship, which does not allow man to aspire to greatness and rise to the high eminence to which he can rise. The second section states that nothing can avail against truth, while the third refers to God's power as manifested in the destruction of falsehood. The date of the revelation of this chapter may be assigned to the fifth year of the call, and therefore it belongs, like the last chapter, to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—Eminence to be attained by the Prophet

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the star when it goes down.[1] 2 Your
companion did not err, nor did he deviate;[2] 3 Nor does he
speak out of desire. 4 It is naught but revelation that is
revealed; 5 The Lord of Mighty Power has taught him,
6 The Lord of Strength; so he attained perfection,[3] 7 And
he is in the highest part of the horizon.[4] 8 Then he drew
near, and drew nearer, 9 So that he was the measure
of two bows or closer still.[5] 10 And He revealed to His

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[1] In the setting of the star, attention is called to the disasters which were in store for the opponents of the Prophet. But the word *najm* also signifies a portion of the Quran, and in this case attention is drawn to every portion of the Holy Quran that was revealed.

[2] This verse establishes the absolute sinlessness of the Holy Prophet, who, we are clearly told, never erred or deviated, i.e. he kept to the right course both in thought and action.

[3] As there is no mention of Gabriel in any of the verses, the personal pronoun does not refer to him. It is the Holy Prophet that is spoken of here as having attained perfection because the Almighty Himself was his Teacher.

[4] The Prophet's being in the highest part of the horizon is in reference to the height of moral greatness to which he attained and to which no other human being ever attained.

[5] *Qáb-a qausain* is an Arab proverb to indicate close relationship between two persons. It is as if their bows by which they defend themselves or attack an enemy are joined together so that a single arrow is shot from them. Hence the closest possible nearness of the Holy Prophet to the Divine Being is implied.

servant what He revealed. 11 The heart was not untrue
in (making him see) what he saw. 12 What! do you
dispute with him as to what he saw? 13 And certainly
he saw Him in another descent, 14 At the farthest lote-
tree;[1] 15 Near which is the garden, the place to be
resorted to. 16 When that which covers covered the
lote-tree; 17 The eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed
the limit. 18 Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of
his Lord. 19 Have you considered Lat and Uzza 20 And
Manat, the third, the last? 21 What! for you the males
and for Him the females?[2] 22 This indeed is an unjust
division! 23 They are naught but names which you
have named, you and your fathers; God has not sent for
them any authority. They follow naught but conjecture
and the low desires which (their) souls incline to; and
certainly the guidance has come to them from their Lord.
24 Or shall man have what he wishes? 25 Nay! for
God is the hereafter and the former (life).

SECTION 2.—Nothing shall avail against Truth

26 And how many an angel is there in the heavens
whose intercession does not avail at all except after God

[1] The reference is to the *Mi'râj*, the famous vision of Ascent of the Holy Prophet, which really signified the eminence to which the Holy Prophet and his religion would rise. The farthest lote-tree signifies the place beyond which human knowledge does not go, as Kashshaf says: "The knowledge of the angels and others ends there." The significance of the words therefore is that the Holy Prophet's knowledge of things Divine was the utmost that could be vouchsafed to man.

[2] Verses 19–21 are made the basis of the false story of what is called the "Lapse of Muhammad," or "Compromise with idolatry," by the Christian writers. We are told that instead of v. 21 the Prophet read the words: "These are exalted females whose intercession is to be sought after." But the insertion of these few words in a chapter which is wholly directed against idolatry is quite out of place; v. 23 condemns idols; v. 26 denies their intercession; v. 28 condemns the giving of names of female deities to angels, and so on. It is further asserted that 22:52 was revealed in connection with this change, but it should be noted that a period of at least eight years must have elapsed between the revelation of this verse and that of 22:52. Moreover, if the Prophet had made any such compromise it could not have been a sudden event, and traces of it should have been met with in other chapters revealed about the same time. But a perusal of these shows clearly that the Quran's condemnation of idolatry was never marked by the slightest change. The only reports regarding this incident are met with in Waqidi and Tabri, the former of whom is known as unreliable and fabricator of reports, and the latter was more or less guilty of "indiscriminate reception," as Muir admits. Thus both internal and external evidence are against the story of the "lapse."

has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses.
27 They who do not believe in the hereafter name the
angels with female names. 28 And they have no knowledge
of it; they do not follow anything but conjecture, and
conjecture does not avail against the truth at all. 29 So
turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder
and does not desire anything but this world's life. 30 That
is their goal of knowledge; surely thy Lord knows best
him who goes astray from His path and He knows best
him who follows the right direction. 31 And God's is
what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, that He
may reward those who do evil according to what they do,
and (that) He may reward those who do good with goodness.
32 Those who keep aloof from the great sins and the
indecencies but the passing idea;[1] for thy Lord is liberal
in forgiving. He knows you best when He brings you
forth from the earth and when you are embryos in
the wombs of your mothers; so do not attribute
purity to your souls; He knows him best who guards
(against evil).

SECTION 3.—**God's Power in destruction of Falsehood**

33 Hast thou seen him who turns his back, 34 And
gives a little and (then) withholds? 35 Has he the know-
ledge of the unseen so that he can see? 36 Or, has he
not been informed of what is in the scriptures of Moses?
37 And (of) Abraham who fulfilled (the commandments):
38 That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of
another; 39 And that man shall have nothing but what
he strives for; 40 And that his striving shall soon be seen;
41 Then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward;
42 And that to thy Lord is the goal; 43 And that He
it is Who makes (men) laugh and makes (them) weep;
44 And that He it is Who causes death and gives life;
45 And that He created pairs, the male and the female,
46 From the small life-germ when it is adapted; 47 And
that on Him is the bringing forth a second time; 48 And
that He it is Who enriches and gives to hold; 49 And that

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[1] Passing idea is quite different from an intention or an attempt to commit a sin, for it leaves no impression on the mind.

He is the Lord of the Sirius ; 50 And that He did destroy
the Ad of old, 51 And Samood, so He spared not,
52 And the people of Noah before, for they were most
unjust and inordinate. 53 And the overthrown cities did
He overthrow, 54 So there covered them that which
covered. 55 Which of thy Lord's benefits wilt thou
dispute about ? 56 This is a warner of the warners of old.
57 The near event draws nigh.[1] 58 There shall be none
besides God to remove it. 59 Do you then wonder at this
announcement ? 60 And will you laugh and not weep ?
61 While you are inconsiderate. 62 So make obeisance to
God and serve (Him).[2]

CHAPTER 54

AL-QAMAR : THE MOON

(*Mecca—3 sections ; 55 verses*)

THE rending asunder of the *moon*, from which the chapter takes its title, was a symbol of the overthrow of the power of the Prophet's opponents, to which this chapter refers clearly both in its opening and concluding verses. The first section, after clearly warning the opponents of the Holy Prophet, contains mention of Noah and Ad, the second of Samood and Lot's people, and the third, after a brief reference to Pharaoh and his hosts, contains a clear prophetical reference to the battle of Badr, which was to humble the power of the Quraish and to be the means of elevating an oppressed and helpless community.

The date of revelation of this chapter cannot be later than the close of the early Meccan period.

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[1] The near event is the doom of the Quraish, the overthrow of their power which was now being utilized against Islam.

[2] Here is a command to prostrate oneself, which is literally obeyed by all Muslims when reciting the Quran or hearing it recited. The chapter, when first revealed, was read in a large assembly containing Muslims as well as unbelievers. When the Holy Prophet prostrated himself in obedience to the command, not only did the Muslims prostrate themselves, but even the idolaters were so overawed that they also prostrated themselves.

It is this simple incident which is connected with the story of the so-called " lapse," and is adduced as proof of its truth. But it will be seen that the prostration was made in obedience to the direct Divine command, *make obeisance to God*, and had nothing to do with the worship of idols. The incidents narrated before it, relating to the grandeur and majesty of God and to the destruction of the wicked, are so impressive that the idolaters could not resist prostrating themselves.

SECTION 1.—Prophet's Opponents ; Noah's People and Ad

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The hour drew nigh and the moon did rend asunder.[1]
2 And if they see a sign they turn aside and say : A
powerful magic. 3 And they call (it) a lie, and follow
their low desires ; and every affair is settled. 4 And some
narratives have already come to them which should have
prohibited (them)—5 Consummate wisdom—but warnings
do not avail. 6 So turn (thy) back on them (for) the day
when the inviter shall invite them to a hard task, 7 Their
eyes cast down, going forth from their graves as if they
were scattered locusts, 8 Hastening to the inviter. The
unbelievers shall say : This is a hard day. 9 Before them
the people of Noah rejected—they rejected Our servant
and called (him) mad, and he was driven away. 10 So he
called upon his Lord : I am overcome, come Thou to
help. 11 And We opened the gates of the cloud with
water pouring down. 12 And We made water to flow
forth in the land in springs ; so the water gathered together
according to a measure already ordained. 13 And We
bore him on that which was made of planks and nails,
14 Running on, before Our eyes, a reward for him who was
denied. 15 And We left it as a sign, but is there any one
who will mind ? [2] 16 How (terrible) was then My chas-
tisement and My warning ! 17 And We have made the
Quran easy for remembrance, but is there any one who

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[1] The rending asunder of the moon in the time of the Holy Prophet is an incident related by a number of his companions ; and the reports of this incident are classed as *Mashhúr* (i.e. *well-known*), and are accepted as correct by such well-known Islamic authorities as Bukharee and Muslim. While the main fact is thus undisputed, there are some differences as to details, some authorities being of opinion that it was only a kind of lunar eclipse, the moon appearing as if it were cloven into two, a part remaining bright and the other part darkening, this being the meaning of one part disappearing and the other remaining. It is, however, more probable that it was some great commotion which convulsed the moon or some other mighty phenomenon which was witnessed by the naked eye or which the bystanders were made to see through the great visionary power of the Holy Prophet. A deep significance, however, underlay the event. The moon was the motto of the Arabs and the rending asunder of it signified the overthrow of their power as against the Holy Prophet.

[2] The reference in *it* is to the fate of Noah's people. Compare 51 : 37–46, where a sign is said to be left in the people of Noah, in Moses' enemies, in Ad and in Samood.

will mind? 18 Ad treated (the truth) as a lie, so how
(terrible) was My chastisement and My warning! 19 We
sent on them a vehemently loud wind in a day of bitter
ill-luck, 20 Tearing men away as if they were the trunks
of palm-trees torn up. 21 How (terrible) was My chastise-
ment and My warning! 22 And We have made the
Quran easy for remembrance, but is there any one who
will mind?

SECTION 2.—Samood and Lot's People

23 Samood rejected the warning. 24 They said:
What! a single mortal from among us! Shall we follow
him? We shall in that case be in sure error and distress:
25 Has the reminder been made to light upon him from
among us? Nay! he is an insolent liar! 26 To-morrow
shall they know who is the liar, the insolent one. 27 We
will send the she-camel as a trial for them; so watch them
and have patience. 28 And inform them that the water
is shared between them; every share of the water shall
be attended.[1] 29 And they called their companion, so
he took (the sword) and slew (her). 30 How (terrible)
was My chastisement and My warning! 31 We sent upon
them a single cry, so they were like the dry fragments of
trees which the maker of an enclosure collects. 32 And We
have made the Quran easy for remembrance, but is there
any one who will mind? 33 The people of Lot treated
the warning as a lie. 34 We sent upon them a stone-storm,
except Lot's followers; We saved them a little before
daybreak, 35 A favour from Us; thus do We reward
him who gives thanks. 36 And he warned them of Our
violent seizure, but they obstinately disputed the warning.
37 And they endeavoured to turn him from his guests,
but We blinded their eyes; so taste My chastisement and
My warning. 38 And a lasting chastisement overtook
them in the morning. 39 So taste My chastisement and
My warning. 40 And We have made the Quran easy for
remembrance, but is there any one who will mind?

[1] Water is here said to be shared between them, i.e. *between the people themselves*, as the word *baina-hum* shows, and not between the people and the she-camel. The concluding statement signifies that "every share of the water shall be attended" by the *she-camel*, i.e. the water shall not be withheld from her at any time.

SECTION 3.—Pharaoh and Prophet's Opponents

41 And the warning came to Pharaoh's people. 42 They
rejected all Our communications, so We overtook them
after the manner of a Mighty, Powerful One. 43 Are the
unbelievers of yours better than these, or is there an
exemption for you in the scriptures? 44 Or do they say:
We are a host allied together to help each other. 45 Soon
shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs.
46 Nay, the hour is their promised time, and the hour
shall be most grievous and bitter.[1] 47 The guilty are
indeed in error and distress. 48 On the day when they
shall be dragged upon their faces into the fire; taste the
touch of hell. 49 We have created every thing according
to a measure. 50 And Our command is but one, as the
twinkling of an eye. 51 And We have already destroyed
the likes of you, but is there any one who will mind?
52 And everything they have done is in the writings.
53 And everything small and great is written down.
54 The righteous shall be in gardens and amplitude,
55 In the seat of truth, with a most Powerful King.

CHAPTER 55

AR-RAHMĀN: THE BENEFICENT

(*Mecca—3 sections; 78 verses*)

THIS chapter takes its title from the name of the Divine Being, *The Beneficent*, with which it begins, and the entire chapter speaks of the beneficence of God.

The chapter opens with the statement that the revelation of the Quran to the Holy Prophet is an act of Divine beneficence, and then proceeds to speak of the bounties of God. The second section

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[1] An incident of the battle of Badr, narrated by Bukharee in his comment on this verse, explains how the Holy Prophet and his companions understood such clear prophecies of the vanquishment of the Quraish. It is related by Ibn-i-Abbas that the Holy Prophet prayed within his tent on the day of Badr, saying: "O Lord! I beseech Thee according to Thy covenant and Thy promise; O Lord! if such is Thy will, Thou mayest not be served after this day." Abu Bakr took his hand and said: "God is sufficient for thee, O Apostle of God." So he went out and he recited: "Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn their backs; but the hour is their promised time, and the hour shall be most grievous and bitter."

This shows that the Holy Prophet understood the *hour* to mean the *hour* or *time of the discomfiture of the Quraish*, and looked upon the battle of Badr as fulfilling this prophecy.

speaks of the judgment which shall overtake the guilty because they persist in rejecting the benefits which a Beneficent God has provided for them; while the third deals with the reward that shall accrue to the faithful who avail themselves of those benefits.

As regards the date of revelation, like other chapters of this group, it can only be assigned to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—Divine Beneficence

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The Beneficent God, 2 Taught the Quran. 3 He
created man, 4 Taught him the mode of expression.
5 The sun and the moon follow a reckoning. 6 And the
herbs and the trees do adore (Him). 7 And the heaven,
He raised it high, and He made the measure,[1] 8 That you
may not be inordinate in respect of the measure. 9 And
keep up the balance with equity and do not make the
measure deficient. 10 And the earth, He has set it for
living creatures; 11 Therein is fruit and palms having
sheathed clusters, 12 And the grain with (its) husk, and
the fragrance. 13 Which of the bounties of your Lord
will you reject?[2] 14 He created man from dry clay as
if it were baked in fire. 15 And He created the jinn of
a flame of fire. 16 Which of the bounties of your Lord
will you reject? 17 Lord of the two Easts and Lord
of the two Wests.[3] 18 Which of the bounties of your
Lord will you reject? 19 He has made the two seas to
flow freely (so that) they meet together: 20 Between
them is a barrier which they cannot pass. 21 Which of

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[1] *Meezán* does not signify in the Holy Quran a pair of scales for weighing things, but *a measure*, implying *any standard of comparison, estimation*, or *judgment*, and the term is here, as elsewhere, used in this broad sense. Therefore it means here *'adl* or *justice*, or the giving of their due to those who deserve it.

[2] This verse is repeated several times in this chapter. In the original the dual form is used instead of the plural. The commentators generally take the dual form literally, and suppose that the two kinds of rational beings, i.e. the *jinn* and the *men*, are meant. But the dual form is sometimes used by the Arabs to give force to the meaning. That here the dual is used for this purpose is shown by the fact that the blessings mentioned are those which serve as means of sustenance for mankind, such as palms and grain, which are not needed for ethereal beings, as the jinn are considered to be. Hence it is mankind only that are addressed; and even if the dual is to be taken literally, the two classes addressed may be taken to be the believers and the unbelievers or the strong and the weak, divisions which are of frequent occurrence in the Holy Quran.

[3] The two Easts and the two Wests signify the different points of the horizon at which the sun rises and sets at the summer and winter solstice.

the bounties of your Lord will you reject ? 22 There come
forth from them both pearls, large and small. 23 Which
of the bounties of your Lord will you reject ? 24 And His
are the ships reared aloft in the sea like mountains.
25 Which of the bounties of your Lord will you reject ?

SECTION 2.—**Judgment of the Guilty**

26 Every one on it must pass away, 27 And there will
endure for ever the person of thy Lord, the Lord of Glory
and Honour. 28 Which of the bounties of your Lord will
you reject ? 29 All those who are in the heavens and the
earth ask of Him ; every moment He is in a state (of
glory). 30 Which of the bounties of your Lord will you
reject ? 31 Soon will We apply Ourselves to you, O you
two armies.[1] 32 Which of the bounties of your Lord will
you reject ? 33 O assembly of the jinn and the men !
if you are able to pass through the regions of the heavens
and the earth, then pass through ; you cannot pass through
but with authority.[2] 34 Which of the bounties of your
Lord will you reject ? 35 The flames of fire and smoke
will be sent on you two, then you will not be able to defend
yourselves.[3] 36 Which of the bounties of your Lord will
you reject ? 37 And when the heaven is rent asunder
and it becomes red like red hide. 38 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject ? 39 On that day
neither man nor jinn shall be asked about his sin. 40 Which
of the bounties of your Lord will you reject ? 41 The
guilty shall be recognized by their marks, so they shall be
seized by the forelocks and feet. 42 Which of the bounties
of your Lord will you reject ? 43 This is the hell which
the guilty called a lie. 44 Round about shall they go

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[1] The two armies here are the believers and the unbelievers, and God's applying Himself to them signifies the judging of their case so that each should have its reward or punishment. Some understand the *Arabs* and the *foreigners*, and thus the allusion may be to the conquest of Arabia and the foreign countries.

[2] The jinn and the men of this verse are the great and the small opponents of the Holy Prophet, or the foreigners and the Arabs as shown in the previous footnote. All these opponents are told that they cannot escape the punishment.

[3] The fire and the smoke were sent in this life in the form of battles that brought destruction upon them. Fire was a symbol of war among the Arabs, though the two terms would express modern warfare much better, which is nothing but fire and smoke.

between it and hot, boiling water. 45 Which of the boun-
ties of your Lord will you reject?

SECTION 3.—Reward of the Righteous

46 And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are
two gardens.[1] 47 Which of the bounties of your Lord will
you reject? 48 Having in them various kinds. 49 Which
of the bounties of your Lord will you reject? 50 In both
of them are two fountains flowing. 51 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 52 In both of
them are two pairs of every fruit. 53 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 54 Reclining on
beds, the inner coverings of which are of silk brocade; and
the fruits of the two gardens are within reach. 55 Which
of the bounties of your Lord will you reject? 56 In them
shall be those who restrained their eyes; before them
neither man nor jinn shall have touched them. 57 Which
of the bounties of your Lord will you reject? 58 As
though they were rubies and pearls. 59 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 60 Is the reward
of goodness aught but goodness? 61 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 62 And besides
these two are two (other) gardens.[2] 63 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 64 Both inclining
to blackness. 65 Which of the bounties of your Lord
will you reject? 66 In both of them are two springs
gushing forth. 67 Which of the bounties of your Lord
will you reject? 68 In both are fruits and palms and
pomegranates. 69 Which of the bounties of your Lord
will you reject? 70 In them are goodly, beautiful ones.
71 Which of the bounties of your Lord will you reject?
72 Pure ones confined to the pavilions. 73 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 74 Man has not

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[1] The two gardens which are granted to the righteous are a garden in this life and a garden in the next. Paradise according to the Holy Quran begins in this life, and it is the spiritual garden of this life which becomes embodied in the next. It is this truth that is made manifest in the verses that follow.

[2] The Quran divides the faithful into two classes as plainly stated in the chapter that follows, those nearest to the Divine presence such as the prophets and the saints, and the ordinary believers. The two gardens spoken of in v. 46 are for the former and those spoken of here are for the latter.

touched them before them nor jinn. 75 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 76 Reclining on
green cushions and beautiful carpets. 77 Which of the
bounties of your Lord will you reject? 78 Blessed be the
name of thy Lord, the Lord of Glory and Honour!

CHAPTER 56

AL-WÂQI'AH: THE GREAT EVENT

(*Mecca*—3 *sections;* 96 *verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from its first verse, and the "Great Event" referred to is the time of the meting out of reward and punishment to the faithful and the opponents respectively with which the last chapter deals. This chapter speaks of three classes of men, the foremost among the faithful being indicated as a separate class, while the other two are the believers and their opponents. The first section, after stating that men will be divided into three classes, speaks of the two classes of the faithful; the second refers to the guilty opponents, while the third states that judgment is inevitable and the three classes will receive what they deserve. It is a Meccan revelation and belongs to the early Meccan period.

SECTION 1.—Three Classes of Men

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the great event comes to pass,[1] 2 There is no
belying its coming to pass—3 Abasing (one party), exalting
(the other), 4 When the earth shall be shaken with a
(severe) shaking, 5 And the mountains shall be made to
crumble with (an awful) crumbling, 6 So that they shall
be as scattered dust, 7 And you shall be three sorts.
8 The companions of good luck: how (happy) are the
companions of good luck! 9 And the companions of ill
luck; how (wretched) are the companions of ill luck!
10 And the foremost are the foremost, 11 These are they
who are drawn nigh (to God);[2] 12 In the gardens of bliss.

[1] The Holy Quran speaks of the *hour* or the *event* not only as signifying the resurrection, but also very frequently as signifying the doom of its opponents. In fact, the doom of the opponents of the Holy Prophet in this life was a foretaste of what they would suffer in the life after death.

[2] To this class belong the prophets and those who walk in their footsteps devoting their lives entirely to the cause of truth.

13 A numerous company from among the first,[1] 14 And
a few from among the latter. 15 On thrones inwrought,
16 Reclining on them, facing one another. 17 Round
about them shall go youths never altering in age, 18 With
goblets and ewers and a cup of pure drink; 19 They shall
not be affected with headache thereby, nor shall they get
exhausted; 20 And fruits such as they choose, 21 And
the flesh of fowl such as they desire, 22 And pure,
beautiful ones, 23 The like of the hidden pearls: 24 A
reward for what they did. 25 They shall not hear therein
vain or sinful discourse, 26 Except the word peace, peace.
27 And the companions of good luck; how (happy) are
the companions of good luck! 28 Amid thornless lote-
trees, 29 And banana-trees, (with fruits) one above another,
30 And extended shade, 31 And water poured forth,
32 And abundant fruit, 33 Neither intercepted nor
forbidden, 34 And exalted resting-places.[2] 35 We have
made them to grow into a (new) growth, 36 And We have
made them virgins, 37 Loving, equals in age, 38 For the
sake of the companions of good luck.

SECTION 2.—The Guilty

39 A numerous company from among the first, 40 And
a numerous company from among the last. 41 And those
of the left hand, how (wretched) are those of the left
hand! 42 In hot wind and boiling water, 43 And the
shade of black smoke, 44 Neither cool nor honourable.
45 For they were before that made to live in ease and
plenty, 46 And they persisted in the great violation.[3]

[1] These were the companions of the Holy Prophet who showed unparalleled devotion to the cause of truth.

[2] It is noteworthy that the blessings granted to the righteous, *the companions of good luck*, are first spoken of as shades, water, fruits, and resting-places; and then, as it were, to dispel all doubts as to what these blessings of the next life are, it is said in v. 35. *We have made them to grow into a new growth*. These words settle conclusively that, whatever these blessings are, whether shades or trees or water or fruits, they are all the fruits of deeds which have been made *to grow into a new growth*. The words that follow this statement are no doubt primarily applicable to women, but, as already shown, it is only because *womanhood stands as a symbol of purity and beauty*. Tirmazi, however, reports that the Holy Prophet quoted this verse when telling an old woman that in Paradise there shall be none old, thus showing that these verses speak of the new life that shall be granted to the righteous women.

[3] That is, the violation of Divine commandments.

47 And they used to say: What! when we die and have
become dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised? 48 Or
our fathers of yore? 49 Say: The first and the last
50 Shall surely be gathered together for the appointed
hour of a known day. 51 Then shall you, O you who err
and call it a lie! 52 Surely eat of a tree of *Zaqqoom*,
53 And fill (your) bellies with it; 54 Then drink over it
of boiling water; 55 And drink as drinks the thirsty
camel. 56 This is their entertainment on the day of
requital. 57 We have created you, why do you not then
accept (the truth)? 58 Have you considered the life-
germ? 59 Is it you that create it or are We the creators?
60 We have ordained death among you and We are not
to be overcome, 61 That We may change your attributes
and make you grow into what you know not.[1] 62 And
you know the first growth, why do you not then mind?
63 Have you considered what you sow? 64 Is it you that
cause it to grow, or are We the causers of growth?
65 If We pleased, We should have made it broken down
into pieces, then would you begin to lament: 66 We
are burdened with debt: 67 Nay! we are deprived.
68 Have you considered the water which you drink?
69 Is it you that send it down from the clouds, or are We
the senders? 70 If We pleased, We would have made it
saltish; why do you not then give thanks? 71 Have you
considered the fire which you strike? 72 Is it you that
produce the trees for it, or are We the producers? 73 We
have made it a reminder and an advantage for the way-
farers of the desert. 74 So glorify the name of thy Lord,
the Great.

SECTION 3.—Judgment is Inevitable

75 But nay! I call to witness the revelation of the
portions (of the Quran);[2] 76 And it is a very great oath

[1] Here is another clear statement that in the new creation, in the resurrection, there shall be a new growth—*what you know not*. It is a higher form of life. Just as from the dust is evolved the man, from his deeds is evolved the higher man.

[2] The meaning adopted is in consonance with the context. *Najm* means a star as well as *a portion of the Quran*, but v. 77 makes it clear that here it is the revelation of the Quran, for it is to this that the personal pronoun *it* occurring there refers.

As the object of an oath in such cases is to draw attention to certain

if you only knew; 77 Certainly it is an honoured Quran,
78 In a book that is protected; 79 None shall touch it
save the purified ones.[1] 80 A revelation by the Lord of
the worlds. 81 Do you hold this announcement in con-
tempt? 82 And to give (it) the lie you make your means
of subsistence. 83 Why is it not that when it comes up
to the throat? 84 And you at that time look on—
85 And We are nearer to it than you, but you do not
see—86 Then why is it not—if you are not held under
authority—87 That you send it (not) back—if you are
truthful?[2] 88 Then if he is one of those drawn nigh
(to God), 89 (He shall have) happiness and bounty and
a garden of bliss. 90 And if he is one of those on the right
hand, 91 Peace to thee from those on the right hand.
92 And if he is one of the rejecters, the erring ones, 93 He
shall have an entertainment of boiling water, 94 And
burning in hell. 95 This indeed is a certain truth.
96 Therefore glorify the name of thy Lord, the Great.

CHAPTER 57

AL-HADÍD: IRON

(*Medina—4 sections; 29 verses*)

THIS chapter is entitled *Iron*, in reference to the punishment which it was necessary should be inflicted upon the opponents who were bent upon extirpating Islam with the sword. It opens with a description of the vastness of the Divine kingdom and of the greatness of the power and knowledge of God, while the Muslims are told that they must spend money and exert themselves to their utmost, and thus sacrifice their own interests to the cause of the truth if

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facts, hence I render the word *uqsim-u* as meaning *I call to witness*. The use of *lá* in such cases is either to contradict a statement opposed to the oath or to give emphasis to the oath.

[1] Vv. 77, 78, and 79 contain three statements regarding the Quran: (1) That it shall be an honoured reading; in other words, its reciters shall be honoured and great men; (2) that it shall be protected in all its purity in writing; and (3) that the impure idolaters shall not even touch it, i.e. they shall not derive advantage from it as long as they remain in their impurity. This also shows that an understanding of the Quran is granted only to those who are pure in heart. It also shows that the Quran should not be touched by one who is impure. Both the verses further show that the Quran existed in a written form from the first, otherwise an injunction not to *touch* it would have been meaningless.

[2] If you are your own masters and not subject to the authority of a Higher Power, why can you not resist death when it comes to you and prolong your lives?

they would be heirs to the Divine kingdom. The second section continuing the subject tells us how lip-profession will leave the hypocrites in utter darkness, and lays stress on sacrifice in the cause of truth. The third refers to the temporary nature of all those worldly enjoyments which keep a man away from the truth, and it closes with a reference to the punishment of those who take up the sword to annihilate Islam. The last section speaks of the Divine grace which is in store for the believers, the vast kingdom to which they are to be made heirs, again exhorting them that they can obtain that grace not by resorting to such practices as monkery, which Islam does not sanction, but by exerting themselves and thus employing their faculties for the attainment of the object which was set before them.

With this chapter is introduced a group of Medina revelations which is continued to the 66th chapter. This group of ten chapters is the last of the Medina revelations in the arrangement of the Holy Book, and it completes, in fact, the subject-matter of the previous Medina chapters, especially the second and the third. The date of revelation of this chapter must be placed after the conquest of Mecca in the year 8 A.H.

SECTION 1.—Sacrifices needed to establish Truth

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares
the glory of God, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. 2 His is
the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life
and causes death; and He has power over all things.
3 He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant over all
and the Knower of hidden things, and He is Cognizant of
all things. 4 He it is Who created the heavens and the
earth in six periods, and He holds control on the throne; He
knows that which goes deep down into the earth and that
which comes forth out of it, and that which comes down
from the heaven and that which goes up into it, and He
is with you wherever you are; and God sees what you do.
5 His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and
to God are (all) affairs returned. 6 He causes the night
to enter in upon the day, and causes the day to enter in
upon the night, and He is Cognizant of what is in the
hearts. 7 Believe in God and His Apostle, and spend
out of what He has made you to be successors of; for
those of you who believe and spend shall have a great
reward. 8 And what reason have you that you should not
believe in God, and the Apostle calls on you that you may

believe in your Lord, and indeed He has made a covenant
with you if you are believers. 9 He it is Who sends down
clear communications upon His servant, that he may bring
you forth from darkness into light; and God is certainly
Kind, Merciful to you. 10 And what reason have you
that you should not spend in God's way, and God's is the
inheritance of the heavens and the earth; not alike among
you are those who spent before the victory [1] and fought
(and those who did not): they are more exalted in rank
than those who spent and fought afterwards; and God
has promised good to all; and God is Aware of what
you do.

SECTION 2.—Faith without Sacrifice is unacceptable

11 Who is there that will set apart for God a goodly
portion, so He will double it for him, and he shall have an
excellent reward? 12 On that day thou wilt see the
faithful men and the faithful women—their light running
before them and on their right hand—good news for you
to-day: gardens in which rivers flow, to abide therein:
that is the grand achievement. 13 On the day when the
hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to
those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light
from your light. It shall be said: Turn back and seek
a light. And separation would be brought about between
them, with a wall having a door in it; within it there shall
be mercy, and on the outside of it there shall be chastise-
ment. 14 They will cry out to them: Were we not with
you? They shall say: Yea! but you caused yourselves
to fall into temptation, and you waited and doubted, and
vain desires deceived you till the threatened punishment
of God came, and the arch-deceiver deceived you about
God. 15 So to-day ransom shall not be accepted from
you nor from those who disbelieved; your abode is the

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[1] The *victory* means the conquest of Mecca. Prior to the conquest of Mecca Islam was surrounded on all sides by enemies, therefore only those who were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of truth could openly join the ranks of Islam. These men had to make great sacrifices, while those who joined the ranks after the conquest of Mecca neither suffered the persecutions to which the earlier converts were subjected nor made those sacrifices in the cause of truth which were the distinctive characteristic of the early believers.

fire; it is your friend,[1] and evil is the resort. 16 Has not
the time yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of God and what has come down of the truth, and (that) they should not be like those who were given the Book before, but the time became prolonged to them, so their hearts hardened, and most of them are transgressors. 17 Know that God
gives life to the earth after its death; indeed, We have made the communications clear to you that you may understand. 18 The charitable men and the charitable
women and (those who) set apart for God a goodly portion— to them it shall be doubled and they shall have a noble reward. 19 And (as for) those who believe in God and
His apostles, these it is that are the truthful and the faithful ones in the sight of their Lord: they shall have their reward and their light; and those who disbelieve and reject Our communications are the inmates of the hell.

SECTION 3.—Seriousness of Life

20 Know that this world's life is only sport and play and gaiety and boasting among yourselves, and a vying in the multiplication of wealth and children,[2] like the rain, whose causing the vegetation to grow, pleases the husbandmen; then it withers away so that thou wilt see it become yellow, then it becomes dried up and broken down; and in the hereafter is a severe chastisement, and (also) forgiveness from God and (His) pleasure; and this world's life is

[1] The fire is here called a *maula*, or a *friend* or *guardian* of the unbelievers, thus showing that it is for their good that they will have to undergo the suffering of fire. In fact, hell is elsewhere also represented to be a place or a state which will ultimately lead to the purification of man, as fire purifies gold of dross. Those who do not prepare themselves in this life for a life after death, will have to undergo an operation in hell, so that they may be fit to make the spiritual progress necessary for a heavenly life. The process of purification, which is in other words *hell*, is thus a necessary stage in the spiritual perfection of those who do not avail themselves of the opportunity granted to them in this life. The keenness of the torments of that other life is due to the keener perception of the soul, which is the necessary result of its separation from the earthly vessel. Bliss and torment therefore grow equally keener in that life.

[2] *This world's life* in the Holy Quran stands for the vanities of life, as this passage clearly shows. The meaning is that life must be taken seriously, not devoted to sport and worldly enjoyment, but turned to good use. The earnestness, the seriousness, of life is a factor which is gradually losing its importance in the daily lives of most men and women in civilized society.

naught but means of deception. 21 Hasten to forgiveness
from your Lord and to a garden the extensiveness of which
is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth;[1]
it is prepared for those who believe in God and His apostles;
that is the grace of God; He gives it to whom He pleases,
and God is the Lord of mighty grace. 22 No evil befalls
on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book
before We bring it into existence; that is easy to God:
23 So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you,
nor be exultant at what He has given you; and God does
not love any arrogant boaster; 24 Those who are niggardly
and enjoin niggardliness on men; and whoever turns back,
then surely God is the Self-sufficient, the Praised. 25 We
sent Our apostles with clear arguments, and sent down
with them the book and the measure,[2] that men may
conduct themselves with equity; and We have made the
iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men,[3]
and that God may know who helps Him and His apostles
in the secret; surely God is Strong, Mighty.

SECTION 4.—**There is no Monkery in Islam**

26 And We sent Noah and Abraham, and We gave to
their offspring the prophethood and the book; and there
are among them those who go aright, and most of them are
transgressors. 27 Then We made Our apostles to follow
in their footsteps, and We sent Jesus, son of Mary, after-
wards, and We gave him the Gospel; and We put in the
hearts of those who followed him kindness and mercy;

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[1] The garden or the paradise is here said to be as extensive as the heavens and the earth, and a similar statement occurs in 3 : 132. These statements afford us the key to a right conception of the Muslim paradise. It is not limited to one particular place, but is as wide as the heavens and the earth, and this is the extent of one man's paradise. There is a report that the Holy Prophet being asked, where is hell if paradise is so extensive, replied, "Glory to God, where is the night when the day comes."

[2] The object of sending down the measure (Ar. *mízán*) is stated to be *that men may conduct themselves with equity*. It therefore stands for rules of justice or principles of equity, as shown in practice by the prophet apart from the book which contains those rules in principle.

[3] Of all the metals none has proved of greater utility than iron. This metal has played an all-important part in civilization, which, indeed, would have been well-nigh impossible without this factor in its development. The mention of *iron* here undoubtedly refers to the resistance against the enemy, which as a last resource had to be effected with the sword.

and (as for) monkery, they innovated it—We did not prescribe it to them—only to seek God's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance ;[1] so We gave their reward to those of them who believed, and most of them are transgressors. 28 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) God and believe in His Apostle ; He will give you two portions of His mercy,[2] and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you, and God is Forgiving, Merciful ; 29 So that the followers of the Book may know that they do not control aught of the grace of God, and that grace is in God's hand, He gives it to whom He pleases ; and God is the Lord of mighty grace.

CHAPTER 58

AL-MUJADILAH : THE PLEADING ONE

(*Medina—3 sections ; 22 verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the circumstances narrated in its first section. There was an old Arab custom of putting away the wife by calling her a mother, but she was not divorced, neither did she continue to hold the status of a wife. A Muslim did the same. The wife complained to the Holy Prophet, and it is by reason of her complaint that she is called *one who pleads* The second section condemns secret counsels against the Holy Prophet, which, owing to Islam having gained power, had become very frequent at Medina—the hypocrites, and the Jews especially, taking part in these conspiracies. The third section speaks more plainly of the hypocrites and the Jews and enjoins the Muslims to be wary of them, and, as they were hidden enemies of Islam, not to befriend them.

The last chapter having referred to the hypocrites, this warns the Muslims of the secret plans of the enemies of Islam, which were

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[1] *There is no monkery in Islam* is a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, quite in accordance with this verse, which states that even among the Christians monkery is an institution which was introduced by themselves, not being a Divine ordinance, although it is quite true that their object in adopting this innovation was to seek Divine pleasure. The Muslims were now becoming a great nation, and as they were brought up in the utmost simplicity, and were also enjoined to disdain the gaiety of this life, they are told that their greatness as a nation depended upon the development of all their faculties, so that while retaining their simplicity of life, they should not stoop to practices like that of monkery. Most of the Sufi orders have done immense harm to the cause of Islam by imitating the monks of other religions. The monkery of Islam is *jihád*, or trying hard in the cause of God, according to another saying of the Holy Prophet.

[2] I.e. the good of this life and the good of the next ; compare 2 : 201.

now being employed against them to encompass their fall. As regards the date of revelation, the chapter may be placed a little before the 33rd chapter, or about 4 A.H., for the custom known as *zihár* is fully dealt with here, while only a reference to it is contained in the 33rd chapter.

PART XXVIII

SECTION 1.—Safeguarding of Women's Rights

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 God indeed knows the plea of her who pleads with thee about her husband and complains to God, and God knows the contentions of both of you ;[1] for God is Hearing, Seeing.
2 Those of you who desert their wives calling them their mothers—they are not their mothers ; their mothers are no others than they who gave them birth ; and surely they utter a hateful word and a falsehood ; and God is surely Pardoning, Forgiving.
3 And those who desert their wives by calling them their mothers, then would recall what they said, should free a captive before they touch each other ; that you are admonished to do ; and God is Aware of what you do.
4 But whoever has not the means, let him fast for two months successively before they touch each other ; and he who is not able (to fast) shall feed sixty needy ones ; that is in order that you may have faith in God and His Apostle, and these are God's limits, and the unbelievers shall have a painful chastisement.
5 Those who act in opposition to God and His Apostle shall be laid down prostrate as those before them were laid down prostrate ; and indeed We have revealed clear communications, and the unbelievers shall have an abasing chastisement.
6 On the day when God will raise them up all together, then inform them of what they did ; God has recorded it while they have forgotten it ; and God is a Witness of all things.

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[1] The woman referred to was Khaula, wife of Aus bin Samit, who was separated from her husband in an old Arab form, the husband saying to the wife, *Thou art to me as the back of my mother*, the word *zihár* being derived from *zahr*, meaning *back*. The result of the pronouncement of these words was a total estrangement of the husband from the wife, but the woman was not free to marry. The Prophet refused to interfere, and Khaula contended with him, and her contention was acceptable to God. The narration of this incident, small as it may seem to be, is to show that even the lowest can approach God and open his heart to the Great Master who is always ready to listen.

SECTION 2.—Secret Counsels condemned

7 Dost thou not see that God knows whatever is in the
heavens and whatever is in the earth? Nowhere is there
a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth
of them, nor (between) five but He is the sixth of them, nor
less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever
they are; and He will inform them of what they did on
the day of resurrection; for God is Cognizant of all things.[1]
8 Hast thou not seen those who are forbidden secret
counsels, then they return to what they are forbidden, and
they hold secret counsels for sin and revolt and disobedience
to the Apostle; and when they come to thee they greet
thee with a greeting with which God does not greet thee,
and they say within themselves: Why does not God
chastise us for what we say? Hell is enough for them;
they shall enter it, and evil is the resort. 9 O you who
believe! when you confer together in private, do not give
to each other counsel of sin and revolt and disobedience
to the Apostle, and give to each other counsel of goodness
and piety; and be careful of (your duty to) God, to Whom
you shall be gathered together. 10 Secret counsels are
only (the work) of the devil that he may cause to grieve
those who believe, and he cannot hurt them in the least
except with God's permission; and on God let the believers
rely. 11 O you who believe! when it is said to you,
Make room in (your) assemblies, make ample room, God
will give you ample; and when it is said, Rise up, do rise
up, God will exalt those of you who believe, and those
who are given knowledge, in high degrees, and God is
Aware of what you do. 12 O you who believe! when you
consult the Apostle, offer something in charity before
your consultation; that is better for you and purer; but
if you do not find, then surely God is Forgiving, Merciful.[2]
13 Do you fear that you will not (be able to) give in charity

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[1] From the woman who contends with the Apostle of God in good faith, the subject is transferred to the hypocrites who, while submitting to him outwardly, carried on secret plots against him.

[2] The verse that follows does not cancel the injunction of this verse, but rather shows that the injunction contained in v. 12 is not obligatory but optional; the legal alms called the *zakát* being the only obligatory alms, as is shown by the words *keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate.* It should also be noted that the Prophet and his family derived no benefit whatever from the alms, for to them the alms were totally prohibited

before your consultation? So if you do not do it—and God has turned to you (mercifully)—keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey God and His Apostle; and God is Aware of what you do.

SECTION 3.—Hidden Enemies

14 Hast thou not seen those who befriend a people with whom God is wroth?[1] They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear falsely while they know. 15 God has prepared for them a severe chastisement; for what they do is evil. 16 They make their oaths to serve as a cover so they turn away from God's way; therefore they shall have an abasing chastisement. 17 Neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them aught against God; they are the inmates of the fire, therein they shall abide. 18 On the day that God will raise them up all, they will swear to Him as they swear to you, and they think that it will do them some good; now surely they are the liars. 19 The devil has gained the mastery over them, and he has made them forget the remembrance of God; they are the devil's party; now surely the devil's party are the losers. 20 Those who act in opposition to God and His Apostle shall be among the most abased. 21 God has written down: I will certainly prevail, I and My apostles; for God is Strong, Mighty. 22 Thou shalt not find a people who believe in God and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to God and His Apostle, even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk;[2] these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens in which rivers flow, abiding therein; God is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him; these are God's party: now surely the party of God are the successful ones.

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[1] The Jews spoken of here are those who, while outwardly in alliance with the Prophet, were secretly planning with his enemies to annihilate the Muslims.

[2] In a state of war between the two parties, friendly connections with the hostile tribes were prohibited, as these would have resulted in great harm to the weaker community of the Muslims. As to those who were not actually engaged in hostilities against the Muslims, see the express directions contained in 60 : 8.

CHAPTER 59

AL-HASHR : THE BANISHMENT

(*Medina*—3 *sections ;* 24 *verses*)

THIS chapter is appropriately termed the *Banishment*, as it deals entirely with the banishment of the Jewish tribe called the *Bani Nadir*, and matters arising out of it. The last chapter warned the Muslims of the secret plans of the Jews and the hypocrites, and this offers an example. The first section deals with the banishment itself and the property acquired thereby ; the second shows how the hypocrites gave the Jews secret promises of help, but failed to fulfil them ; and the third ends the chapter with an exhortation to the faithful and an exposition of some of the Divine attributes, indicating the greatness and purity of the Divine Being. The date of revelation of this chapter may be placed a little after the banishment which it narrates, i.e. in the fourth year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—**The Exiled Jews**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the
earth declares the glory of God, and He is the Mighty, the
Wise. 2 He it is Who caused those who disbelieved of
the followers of the Book to go forth from their homes at the
first banishment ; [1] you did not think that they would go
forth, while they were certain that their fortresses would
defend them against God ; but God came to them whence
they did not expect and cast terror into their hearts ; they
demolished their houses with their own hands and the
hands of the believers ; [2] therefore take a lesson, O you
who have eyes ! 3 And had it not been that God had
decreed for them the exile, He would have chastised them
in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have chastise-
ment of the fire. 4 That is because they acted in opposi-

[1] The banishment spoken of here took place six months after the battle of Uhud, when the Bani Nadir, a Jewish tribe of Medina who had at first entered into a covenant with the Holy Prophet, showed signs of treachery, making secret alliance with the enemies of Islam, and were punished with banishment This is called the *first banishment*, to distinguish it from the second, which took place in the time of Umar, when the Jews settled at Khaibar were banished to Syria, and which is prophetically referred to here.

[2] The Bani Nadir, being granted ten days in which to collect and take with them such of their property as they desired, devoted the time at their disposal to the demolition of their houses, lest they should be fit for habitation.

tion to God and His Apostle, and whoever acts in opposition
to God, then surely God is severe in retributing (evil).
5 Whatever palm-tree you cut down or leave it standing
upon its roots, it is by God's permission, and that He may
abase the transgressors. 6 And whatever God restored
to His Apostle from them, you did not press forward
against it any horse or a riding camel, but God gives
authority to His apostles against whom He pleases, and
God has power over all things. 7 Whatever God has
restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it
is for God and for the Apostle, and for the near of kin and
the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it
may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you,[1]
and whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and from
whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of
(your duty to) God; for God is severe in retributing (evil).
8 (It is) for the poor who fled, those who were driven from
their homes and their possessions, seeking grace of God
and (His) pleasure, and assisting God and His Apostle;
these it is that are the truthful. 9 And those who made
their abode in the city and in the faith before them love
those who have fled to them, and they do not find in their
hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them)
before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and
whoever is preserved from the niggardliness of his soul,
these it is that are the successful ones.[2] 10 And those

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[1] The *fai*, or property obtained from the enemy where there was no fighting, was considered a part of the public treasury, as stated here, and therefore when after the Holy Prophet's death, his daughter Fatima claimed a share of *Fidk*, which was also a part of *fai*, Abu Bakr refused it on the ground that it was not the personal property of the Holy Prophet, and he decided, in fact, that a prophet does not leave any property to be inherited by his heirs. The feud which thus arose rent the Muslim world into two great schools. The prohibition contained in the words *so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you* is directed against the Prophet's share being inherited at all.

[2] By *those who made their abode in the city and in the faith* are meant the *Ansar* or *the Helpers*, i.e. the Muslim residents of Medina. When the Muslims fled from Mecca they found a refuge in Medina, where the Muslim inhabitants received them as if they were their brothers, lodging them in their own houses, and many of them were still living in the houses of their benefactors when the banishment of the Bani Nadir took place. On this the Holy Prophet asked the Helpers to consent to either of the two proposals, i.e. to have a share of what was acquired from the Bani Nadir and give part of their houses and wealth to the Refugees, or to let the (poor) Refugees alone have a share in that property, so that with it they might

who come after them say: Our Lord! forgive us and
those of our brethren who had precedence of us in faith,
and do not allow any spite to remain in our hearts towards
those who believe; our Lord! Thou art Kind, Merciful.

SECTION 2.—Hypocrites do not help Jews

11 Hast thou not seen the hypocrites? They say to
those of their brethren who disbelieve from among the
followers of the Book: If you are driven forth, we shall
go forth with you, and we will never obey any one con-
cerning you, and if you are fought against, we will help
you; and God bears witness that they are liars. 12 If
they are driven forth, they will not go forth with them,
and if they are fought against, they will not help them,
and even if they had helped them, they would have turned
(their) backs, then they shall not be helped. 13 You are
indeed greater in being feared in their hearts than God;
that is because they are a people who do not understand.
14 They will not fight against you in a body save in
fortified towns or from behind walls; their fighting between
them is severe; thou mayest think them as one body, and
their hearts are disunited; that is because they are a people
who have no sense. 15 Like those before them shortly [1]
who tasted the evil result of their affair; and they shall
have a painful chastisement. 16 Like the devil when he
says to man, Disbelieve, but when he disbelieves, he says:
I am clear of thee; I fear God, the Lord of the worlds.
17 Therefore the end of both of them is that they are both
in fire to abide therein, and that is the reward of the unjust.

SECTION 3.—An Exhortation

18 O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) God,
and let every soul consider what it has sent on for the
morrow, and be careful of (your duty to) God; for God is
Aware of what you do. 19 And be not like those who
forsook God, so He made them forsake their own souls:

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build their houses and make a start in some business or trade. The *Ansar* replied that they were willing that the Refugees alone should have a share, and, notwithstanding that they might continue to lodge in their houses.

[1] According to some, this description applies to the Bani Qainuqa, and according to others, to the Quraish slain in the field of Badr.

these it is that are the transgressors. 20 Not alike are
the inmates of the fire and the dwellers of the garden : the
dwellers of the garden are they that are the achievers.
21 Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, thou
wouldst have seen it falling down, splitting asunder because
of the fear of God, and We set forth these parables to men
that they may reflect. 22 He is God besides Whom there
is no god : the Knower of the unseen and the seen ; He
is the Beneficent, the Merciful. 23 He is God, besides
Whom there is no God ; the King, the Holy, the Author of
peace, the Granter of security, Guardian over all, the
Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness ;
glory be to God from what they set up (with Him). 24 He
is God the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner ; His are the
most excellent names ; whatever is in the heavens and
the earth declares His glory ; and He is the Mighty, the
Wise.

CHAPTER 60

AL-MUMTAHANAH : THE EXAMINED ONE

(*Medina—2 sections ; 13 verses*)

THE whole of this chapter deals with the relations between the Muslims and the non-Muslims, and in particular with the undesirability of relations with those enemies who were bent upon extirpating Islam, and who, not being satisfied with expelling the Muslims from their homes, now made war on them. It is in this connection that the Holy Prophet is enjoined to *examine the women* who came to him from among the idolaters for the purpose of embracing Islam, so that if they are found to be inspired by sincere motives they should be retained. It is this circumstance which gives the title of the *Examined One* to this chapter, and thus it shows that, notwithstanding enmity, the Muslims were required to be fair in their dealings with the unbelievers. The date of its revelation may be approximately placed about the year 7 A.H., between the truce made at Hudaibiyya and the conquest of Mecca.

SECTION 1.—Relations with Non-Muslims

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O you who believe ! do not take My enemy and your
enemy for friends : would you offer them love while they
deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the
Apostle and yourselves because you believe in God, your

Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and
seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love to them?
And I know what you conceal and what you manifest;
and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray
from the straight path. 2 If they find you, they will be
your enemies, and will stretch forth towards you their
hands and their tongues with evil, and they ardently desire
that you may disbelieve.[1] 3 Your relationships would not
profit you, nor your children, on the day of resurrection;
He will decide between you, and God sees what you do.
4 Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham
and those with him when they said to their people: We
are clear of you and of what you serve besides God; we
renounce you, and enmity and hatred has appeared between
us and you for ever until you believe in God alone—but
not in what Abraham said to his sire: I would ask for-
giveness for thee, and I do not control for thee aught from
God—our Lord! on Thee do we rely, and to Thee do we
turn, and to Thee is the eventual coming: 5 Our Lord!
do not make us a trial for those who disbelieve, and forgive
us, our Lord! for Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.
6 Certainly there is for you in them a good example, for
him who fears God and the last day; and whoever turns
back, then surely God is the Self-sufficient, the Praised.

SECTION 2.—Relations with Non-Muslims

7 It may be that God will bring about friendship between
you and those whom you hold to be your enemies among
them; and God is Powerful; and God is Forgiving,
Merciful.[2] 8 God does not forbid you respecting those
who have not made war against you on account of (your)
religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes,
that you show them kindness and deal with them justly;
for God loves the doers of justice.[3] 9 God only forbids you

[1] These verses make it clear that the Muslims were being forbidden friendly relations with an enemy that was bent on their extirpation.

[2] This verse makes it clear that the prohibition against friendly relations with the unbelievers was only temporary, to be operative only so long as the war continued. The friendship prophetically referred to here was brought about after the conquest of Mecca.

[3] This verse and the one that follows, revealed as they were at a time when the relations between the Muslims and the unbelievers were most strained, on account of the existence of a continual state of war between

respecting those who made war upon you on account of
(your) religion, and drove you forth from your homes and
backed up (others) in your expulsion, that you make
friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them,
these are the unjust. 10 O you who believe! when
believing women come to you fleeing, examine them ; God
knows best their faith ; then if you find them to be believing
women, do not send them back to the unbelievers ; [1]
neither are these (women) lawful for them, nor are those
(men) lawful for them, and give them what they have
spent ; and no blame attaches to you in marrying them
when you give them their dowries ; and hold not to the
ties of marriage of unbelieving women, and ask for what
you have spent, and let them ask for what they have spent.[2]
That is God's judgment ; He judges between you ; and
God is Knowing, Wise. 11 And if any thing (out of the
dowries) of your wives has passed away from you to the
unbelievers, then your turn comes, give to those whose
wives have gone away the like of what they have spent,
and be careful of (your duty to) God in Whom you believe.
12 O Prophet! when believing women come to thee
giving thee a pledge that they will not associate aught with
God, and will not steal, and will not commit fornication,
and will not kill their children, and will not bring a calumny
which they have forged of themselves, and will not disobey

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the two parties, settle conclusively that friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, as such, are not prohibited by the Holy Quran. It is in the light of these verses that all the verses forbidding friendly relations with the unbelievers should be read, because here the principle is revealed in unmistakable language, allowing friendly relations with one kind of unbelievers and prohibiting such relations with those of another kind. It also upsets the oft-repeated libel of Christian writers, wherein the uninformed are led to believe in the existence of a fanatic intolerance of all non-Muslims on the part of the followers of the Holy Prophet.

[1] The women converts to Islam were not taken unconditionally, for they might have deserted their husbands. The Holy Quran requires that they should be examined. In accordance with this injunction we find it related that the Holy Prophet obtained the assurance of such women under oath that they had not left their homes except on account of Islam, and that it was not the desertion of their husbands or the love of any one that had prompted them to flee.

[2] The state of permanent warfare maintained between the Muslims and the unbelievers did not allow of any social relationship to be established between the two parties ; hence the marriage relationships between Muslim men and unbelieving women as well as those between the Muslim women and the unbelieving men could no longer be maintained : each party having returned the dowry, divorce automatically resulted.

thee in what is good, accept their pledge, and ask forgive-
ness for them from God ; for God is Forgiving, Merciful.[1]
13 O you who believe ! do not make friends with a people
with whom God is wroth ; indeed they despair of the
hereafter, as the unbelievers despair of those in graves.

CHAPTER 61

AS-SAFF : THE RANKS

(*Medina*—2 *sections* ; **14** *verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from the injunction to the Muslims to fight in defence of the faith in *ranks*, for fighting was now essential for the preservation of the very life of the Muslim community. After giving that injunction, the first section proceeds to cite an example of the persecution of Moses at the hands of his own people, and then a prophecy announced by Jesus as to the Holy Prophet's advent, which made it clear that truth should be finally victorious. Then follows a prophecy of the triumph of Islam over all other religions. The second section exhorts the Muslims to exert themselves in the cause of truth if they would see that prophecy fulfilled, citing the example of Jesus, whose followers, notwithstanding the apparent triumph of the enemy, finally succeeded in propagating the truth. The date of revelation of this chapter may be approximately placed between the 2nd and 4th years of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—**Triumph of Islam**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the
earth declares the glory of God ; and He is the Mighty,
the Wise. 2 O you who believe ! why do you say that
which you do not do ? 3 It is most hateful to God that you
should say that which you do not do. 4 God loves those who
fight in His way in ranks as if they were a firm and compact
wall. 5 And when Moses said to his people : O my
people ! why do you give me trouble when you know that
I am God's apostle to you ? But when they turned aside,
God made their hearts turn aside, and God does not guide
the transgressing people. 6 And when Jesus, son of Mary,
said : O children of Israel ! I am the apostle of God to

[1] Most of the commentators think that the pledge spoken of in this verse was only taken by the Holy Prophet after the conquest of Mecca, when large numbers of women as well as men embraced Islam.

you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and
giving the good news of an Apostle who will come after me,
his name being Ahmad ;[1] but when he came to them with
clear arguments they said : This is clear enchantment.
7 And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against
God and he is invited to Islam, and God does not guide
the unjust people. 8 They desire to put out the light of
God with their mouths, but God will perfect His light,
though the unbelievers may be averse. 9 He it is Who
sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion,
that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them,
though the polytheists may be averse.

SECTION 2.—Great Sacrifices must be made

10 O you who believe ! shall I lead you to a merchandise
which may deliver you from a painful chastisement ?
11 You shall believe in God and His Apostle, and struggle
hard in God's way with your property and your lives ;
that is better for you, did you but know ! 12 He will
forgive you your faults and cause you to enter into gardens
in which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in gardens

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[1] Jesus' verification of the Torah, or the books of Moses, here, refers to the prophecy therein about the advent of the Holy Prophet, which is clearly stated in the latter part of the passage, where Jesus is spoken of as prophesying his advent. It should be borne in mind that the Holy Prophet had two names : he was called Muhammad as well as Ahmad, both names being derived from the same root *hamd*, which signifies *praising*, the word *Muhammad* meaning *a man praised much*, and *Ahmad* meaning *one who praises much*. In this connection I may quote only John 16 : 12–14 : " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will guide you into all truth : He shall glorify Me." Now this prophecy about the *spirit of truth*, which is the same as the *comforter*, clearly stated in John 14 : 17, establishes two points : (1) Jesus could not guide into all truth, because his teaching was really directed only to the reform of the Israelites, and he denounced only their crying evils ; but the teaching of the *Comforter* would be a perfect one, guiding men into all truth, and the Holy Quran is the only book which claims to be a perfect law. (2) That he will glorify Jesus, and the Holy Prophet did glorify Jesus by denouncing as utterly false all those calumnies which were heaped upon Jesus and his mother. The only objection to this clear fulfilment of the prophecy in the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is, that the *Comforter* is here called the *spirit of truth*, and that hence the words cannot be applicable to a man. But it is equally difficult to see why Jesus should call him *another comforter*, as he does in John 14 : 16, thus showing that he would come as a human being as he himself had come ; and then, according to all sacred history, the teachers have been always *men*. And it should be noted that the Holy Prophet is frequently called *The Truth* in the Holy Quran, as in 17 : 81.

of perpetuity; that is the mighty achievement; 13 And
yet another (blessing) that you love: help from God and a
victory near at hand; and give good news to the believers.
14 O you who believe! be helpers (in the cause) of God,
as Jesus, son of Mary, said to (his) disciples: Who are my
helpers in the cause of God? The disciples said: We
are helpers (in the cause) of God. So a party of the children
of Israel believed and another party disbelieved; and We
aided those who believed against their enemy, and they
became predominant.

CHAPTER 62

AL-JUMU'AH: THE CONGREGATION

(*Medina—2 sections; 11 verses*)

THIS chapter receives its name from the exhortation to gather together on the day of *congregation*, or *Friday*. The first section, after stating that the Prophet was a purifier of his immediate followers as well as of those who would come later on, warns the Muslims of the danger which brought about the downfall of the Jewish nation, who had with them the letter of the law, but were not true to its spirit. The second section enjoins the Muslims not to neglect their prayers in congregation, and the congregation of Friday is specially spoken of. The date of its revelation may be assigned to about the first year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—A Teacher for all Ages

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in
the earth declares the glory of God, the King, the Holy,
the Mighty, the Wise. 2 He it is Who raised among the
illiterates an Apostle from among themselves, who recites
to them His communications and purifies them, and
teaches them the Book and the wisdom, although they
were before in clear error, 3 And others from among them
who have not yet joined them; and He is the Mighty, the
Wise.[1] 4 That is God's grace; He grants it to whom He
pleases, and God is the Lord of mighty grace. 5 The

[1] The Prophet is here declared to be a teacher not only of his immediate disciples but also of those who would come after him, the significance clearly being that he would continue to be the Spiritual Teacher of humanity to the end of time.

likeness of those who were charged with the Torah, then they did not observe it, is as the likeness of the ass bearing books; evil is the likeness of the people who reject the communications of God; and God does not guide the unjust people.
6 Say: O you who are Jews, if you think that you are the favourites of God to the exclusion of other people, then invoke death if you are truthful.[1]
7 And they will never invoke it because of what their hands have sent before; and God is Cognizant of the unjust.
8 Say: The death from which you flee will surely overtake you, then you shall be sent back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of that which you did.

SECTION 2.—**Friday Prayer**

9 O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of God and leave off business; that is better for you if you know.[2]
10 And when the prayer is ended, disperse abroad in the land and seek of God's grace, and remember God much that you may be successful.
11 And when they see merchandise or sport they break up for it, and leave thee standing. Say: What is with God is better than sport and merchandise, and God is the best of sustainers.

CHAPTER 63

AL-MUNÂFIQÛN: THE HYPOCRITES

(*Medina—2 sections; 11 verses*)

THE entire chapter, as its name shows, deals with the *Hypocrites* and condemns *hypocrisy*. The first section speaks of the hypocrites, their false promises and their desire to see Islam abased and trampled under foot, while the second section concludes with an exhortation to the Muslims to be sincere and not to be led away by the love

[1] See 2 : 94 and the note on it.

[2] The time of the Friday prayer is just after noon, and the service, which consists only of two *rak'ats* instead of the four *rak'ats* of the early afternoon prayer, is preceded by a sermon. The words of this verse and those of the following show that ordinary business may be carried on by a Muslim on Friday before or after the prayer. Hence, unlike the Jewish and the Christian Sabbaths, it is not necessarily a day of rest. But attendance at the Friday prayers is obligatory, and as soon as the call to prayer is made, every Muslim is bound to leave business of every kind and immediately to hasten to the mosque.

of wealth and children. The hypocrisy of the upholders of a cause is fatal to its advancement; hence its connection with the last chapter. The date of revelation may be assigned to a time when the hypocrites became separated from the believers, which first took place in the battle of Uhud, and therefore it was probably after the third year of Hejira that it was revealed.

SECTION 1.—The Hypocrites

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the hypocrites come to thee, they say: We
bear witness that thou art God's Apostle; and God knows
that thou art His Apostle, and God bears witness that the
hypocrites are liars. 2 They make their oaths a shelter,
and thus turn away from God's way; evil is that which
they do. 3 That is because they believed, then disbelieved,
so a seal was set upon their hearts and they do not under-
stand. 4 And when thou seest them, their persons will
please thee, and if they speak, thou wilt listen to their
speech; (they are) as if they were big pieces of wood clad
with garments; they think every cry to be against them.
They are the enemy, so beware of them; may God destroy
them, whence are they turned back? 5 And when it is
said to them, Come, the Apostle of God will ask forgive-
ness for you, they turn back their heads, and thou mayest
see them turning away while they are big with pride.
6 It is alike to them whether thou beg forgiveness for
them or do not beg forgiveness for them, God will never
forgive them; for God does not guide the transgressing
people. 7 They it is who say: Do not spend upon those
who are with the Apostle of God until they break up.
And God's are the treasures of the heavens and the earth,
but the hypocrites do not understand. 8 They say: If
we return to Medina, the mighty will surely drive out the
meaner therefrom; and to God belongs the might and to
His Apostle and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not
know.

SECTION 2.—Believers exhorted

9 O you who believe! let not your wealth or your
children divert you from the remembrance of God; and
whoever does that, these are the losers. 10 And spend
out of what We have given you before death comes to one

of you, so that he should say: My Lord! why didst Thou
not respite me to a near term, so that I should have given
alms and been of the doers of good deeds? 11 And God
does not respite a soul when its appointed term has come,
and God is Aware of what you do.

CHAPTER 64

AT-TAGHÂBUN: MANIFESTATION OF DEFECTS

(*Medina*—2 *sections*; 18 *verses*)

THE chapter is appropriately entitled *Manifestation of Defects*, because here we are told that not only will unbelievers find their defects manifested on a certain day, but believers will also find such defects manifested if they have failed in their conduct and have abandoned those principles which have been promulgated for their guidance, allowing worldly attractions to distract their minds from the attainment of religious and moral perfection. It is one of the earliest Medina revelations.

SECTION 1.—Unbelievers warned

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the
earth declares the glory of God; to Him belongs the
kingdom, and to Him is due (all) praise, and He has power
over all things. 2 He it is Who created you, but one of
you is an unbeliever and one of you is a believer; and God
sees what you do. 3 He created the heavens and the
earth with truth, and He formed you, then made goodly
your forms, and to Him is the ultimate resort. 4 He
knows what is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows
what you hide and what you manifest; and God is Cog-
nizant of what is in the hearts. 5 Has there not come to
you the story of those who disbelieved before, then tasted
the evil result of their affair, and they had a painful
chastisement? 6 That is because there came to them
their apostles with clear arguments, but they said: Shall
mortals guide us? So they disbelieved and turned back,
and God does not stand in need (of anything) and God is
Self-sufficient, Praised. 7 Those who disbelieve think
that they shall never be raised. Say: Aye! by my

Lord! you shall certainly be raised, then you shall be informed of what you did; and that is easy to God.
8 Therefore believe in God and His Apostle and the Light which We have revealed; and God is Aware of what you do.
9 On the day that He will gather you for the day of gathering, that is the day of the manifestation of defects,[1] and whoever believes in God and does good, He will remove from him his evil and cause him to enter gardens in which rivers flow, to abide therein for ever; that is the great achievement.
10 And those who disbelieve and reject Our communications are the inmates of the fire, abiding therein, and evil is the resort.

SECTION 2.—Believers warned against Temptations

11 No affliction comes about but by God's permission; and whoever believes in God, He guides aright his heart; and God is Cognizant of all things.
12 And obey God and obey the Apostle, but if you turn back, then upon Our Apostle devolves only the clear delivery (of the message).
13 God, there is no god but He; and upon God let the believers rely.
14 O you who believe! some of your wives and your children are your enemies,[2] therefore beware of them; and if you pardon and forbear and forgive, then surely God is Forgiving, Merciful.
15 Your possessions and your children are only a trial, and God it is with Whom is a great reward.
16 Therefore be careful of (your duty to) God as much as you can, and hear and obey and spend, it is better for yourselves; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that shall be successful.
17 If you set apart for God a goodly portion, He will double it for you and forgive you; and God is the Multiplier (of rewards), Forbearing,
18 The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise.

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[1] The day of resurrection is here called the day of manifestation of defects, because man's hidden defects will on that day be completely manifested.

[2] Because it is most often for the sake of one's wife and children that one acts wrongfully towards others. Thus, in some cases, the wife or the children become an enemy to man.

CHAPTER 65

AT-TALÂQ: THE DIVORCE

(Medina—2 sections; 12 verses)

THIS chapter deals with certain rules regarding divorce in its first section, and is accordingly entitled *The Divorce*. The second gives an unmistakable warning to the Meccans, and shows that the Prophet had brought to them light. The law of divorce had already been given to the Muslims in the second chapter, and this chapter is, as it were, a complement of that. The date of revelation may be assigned approximately to the sixth year of Hejira.

SECTION 1.—Directions for Divorce

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O Prophet! when you divorce women, divorce them
for their prescribed time,[1] and calculate the number of the
days prescribed, and be careful of (your duty to) God.
your Lord. Do not drive them out of their houses, nor
should they themselves go forth, unless they commit an
open indecency; and these are the limits of God; and
whoever goes beyond the limits of God, he indeed does
injustice to his own soul. Thou dost not know that God
may after that bring about an event (of reunion). 2 So
when they have reached their prescribed time, retain
them with kindness or separate them with kindness, and
call to witness two just ones from among you, and give
upright testimony for God. With that is admonished he
who believes in God and the latter day; and whoever is
careful of (his duty to) God, He will make for him an outlet,
3 And give him sustenance from whence he thinks not, and
whoever trusts in God, He is sufficient for him; for God
attains His purpose; God indeed has appointed a measure

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[1] The prescribed time is ordinarily, according to 2 : 228, three courses. But in the case of women with child, and in certain other cases, the prescribed time is laid down in v. 4 of this chapter. The rule laid down here is that divorce should be pronounced at a time when the monthly courses are not on, so that the prescribed time of divorce may commence immediately after the pronouncement of divorce. These words also preclude the necessity for a second or a third divorce, for the prescribed time must be counted immediately after the pronouncement of divorce, and a second or a third divorce during the prescribed time is meaningless.

for every thing. 4 And for those of your women who have despaired of menstruation, if you have a doubt, the prescribed time shall be three months, and of those too who have not had their courses; and (as for) the pregnant women, their prescribed time is that they lay down their burden; and whoever is careful of (his duty to) God, He will make his affair easy for him. 5 That is the command of God which He has revealed to you, and whoever is careful of (his duty to) God, He will remove from him his evil and give him a big reward. 6 Lodge them where you lodge according to your means, and do not injure them in order that you may straiten them; and if they are pregnant, spend on them until they lay down their burden; then if they suckle for you, give them their recompense, and enjoin one another among you to do good; and if you disagree, another (woman) shall suckle for him. 7 Let him who has abundance spend out of his abundance, and whoever has his means of subsistence straitened to him, let him spend out of that which God has given him; God does not lay on any soul a burden except so far as He has granted it (the means); God will bring about ease after difficulty.

SECTION 2.—**Mecca warned**

8 And how many a town which rebelled against the commandment of its Lord and His apostles, so We called it to account severely and We chastised it (with) a stern chastisement. 9 And it tasted the evil result of its affair, and the end of its affair was perdition. 10 God has prepared for them severe chastisement, therefore be careful of (your duty to) God, O men of understanding who believe! God has indeed sent to you a reminder, 11 An Apostle who recites to you the clear communications of God so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darkness into light; and whoever believes in God and does good deeds, He will cause him to enter gardens in which rivers flow, to abide therein for ever; God has indeed given him a goodly sustenance. 12 God is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth, the like of them; [1]

[1] The statement made here that there are "seven heavens and of the earth the like of them" is significant. In Arabic, the same thing may be a *samá* or *heaven* with respect to one below it and an *ard* or *earth* with respect

the decree continues to descend among them, that you may know that God has power over all things and that God indeed encompasses all things in (His) knowledge.

CHAPTER 66

AT-TAHRÍM: THE PROHIBITION

(Medina—2 sections; 12 verses)

THIS chapter is called *The Prohibition*, the title being taken from the statement made in the first verse that the Prophet (and those who follow him) should not forbid themselves what God has made lawful. The incident in the life of the Holy Prophet referred to in these words is his temporary separation from his wives when they demanded more necessaries of life and a better condition of living; see 33:28. And, as the last chapter deals with divorce, it is quite natural that it should be followed by one referring to temporary separation. The first section of this chapter thus speaks of the relations of the Holy Prophet with his wives, while the second speaks of the progress to be made by his faithful followers. The connection between these two sections may not be clear to a superficial reader, and hence a word may be said on the point. The word *zauj*, which means *a wife* or *a husband*, also signifies *an associate* or *a comrade*, and the spiritual relation between the Prophet and a true follower of his is often metaphorically compared to the relation subsisting between husband and wife. It should also be noted that unbelievers and believers are in the concluding verses of the section compared to women, the wives of Noah and Lot on the one hand, and the wife of Pharaoh and Mary, the mother of Jesus, on the other. The date of revelation may be placed about the year 9 A.H., which is the date of the separation.

SECTION 1.—Prophet's Domestic Relations

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O Prophet! why dost thou forbid (thyself) that which God has made lawful for thee; thou seekest to please thy wives; and God is Forgiving, Merciful.[1] 2 God indeed

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to one above it. Hence each of the seven major planets (the earth being the eighth) is a heaven as well as an earth, and this is what is meant here. The descending of the decree among these is interpreted by Mujahid as meaning the existence of life and death in them.

[1] The reference here is clearly to the well-known temporary separation, regarding which the Holy Prophet made a vow, and which is actually spoken of in the Bukharee in commenting on this chapter as being referred to in these verses by no less an authority than Umar. And the verses that follow uphold this view, as no other incident can explain v. 5, which

has sanctioned to you the expiation of your oaths ; and
God is your Protector, and He is the Knowing, the Wise.
3 And when the Prophet secretly communicated a piece
of information to one of his wives—but when she informed
(others) of it, and God made him to know it, he made
known part of it, and avoided part ; so when he informed
her of it, she said : Who informed thee of this ? He said :
The Knowing, the one Aware, informed me.[1] 4 If you
both turn to God, then indeed your hearts are already
inclined (to this) ; and if you back up each other against
him, then surely God is his Guardian, and Gabriel and the
doers of good among the believers, and besides that the
angels are (his) helpers. 5 Maybe, his Lord, if he divorce
you,[2] will give him in your place wives better than you,
submissive, faithful, obedient, penitent, adorers, fasters,
widows and virgins. 6 O you who believe ! save your-
selves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and
stones ; over it are angels stern and strong who do not
disobey God in what He commands them, and do as they
are commanded. 7 O you who disbelieve ! do not make
excuses to-day ; you shall be rewarded only according to
what you did.

SECTION 2.—**Progress to be made by the Faithful**

8 O you who believe ! turn to God a sincere turning ;
maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause
you to enter gardens in which rivers flow, on the day
on which God will not abase the Prophet and those who

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speaks of the Prophet's willingness to divorce all his wives. Ibn-i-Jarir also reports Ayesha, the Holy Prophet's wife, as saying that this verse was revealed in connection with *ilá* or *temporary separation.* In the face of this clear evidence, the verse cannot be taken to refer to any other incident whatsoever. It may be added, however, that the Coptic lady Mary was a wife of the Holy Prophet and the mother of his son Ibrahim, and there was nothing clandestine in his conjugal relations with her.

[1] There is no trustworthy report showing to what particular incident reference is here made. But as the same subject is continued in the verses that follow, it appears that the matter spoken of here was in some way connected with the Prophet's vow of temporary separation.

[2] That the Prophet was prepared to divorce his wives if they persisted in their demand clearly shows that all these verses relate to the incident of temporary separation. The Holy Prophet, however, did not divorce any of his wives, which shows that all those qualifications were met with in them. Compare 33 : 51

believe with him; their light shall run on before them
and on their right hands; they shall say: Our Lord!
make perfect for us our light, and grant us protection,
for Thou hast power over all things.[1] 9 O Prophet!
strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and
remain firm against them; and their abode is hell; and
evil is the resort. 10 God sets forth to those who dis-
believe the example of the wife of Noah and the wife of
Lot: they were both under two of Our righteous servants,
but they acted treacherously towards them, so they
availed them naught against God, and it was said: Enter
both the fire with those who enter.[2] 11 And God sets
forth to those who believe the example of the wife of
Pharaoh, when she said: My Lord! build for me a house
with Thee in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and
his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people:[3] 12 And
Mary, the daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity,
so We breathed into him of Our inspiration, and she
accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His
books, and she was of the obedient ones.[4]

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[1] This shows that, according to the Holy Quran, paradise is not only a place to enjoy the blessings and reap the rewards of one's previous good deeds, but it is also the starting-point of a never-ceasing spiritual advancement. The prayer for the perfection of the light is really an unceasing desire for perfection, showing that spiritual progress in that life will be endless. Thus the Holy Quran teaches the principle that the development of man's faculties, as it takes place in this life, however unlimited, is not sealed by finality, but is really the starting-point towards an immeasurably wider vista of the realms to be traversed, opening out after death when the soul is liberated from the limitations of its casement of clay, assuming another body, which will be in accord with the deeds performed here below.

[2] This is an instance of the followers of prophets going against the principles of their teachers; therefore, those prophets will not be able to save them.

[3] This is an example of good men who are not yet made free from the bondage of sin, for which Pharaoh stands here as a typical example; but they ardently desire to be rid of sin, striving hard to free themselves from all trammels.

[4] The example of the righteous given in this parable illustrates how Divine inspiration is granted to the perfect ones. The word *him* (Ar. *hi* in *fihi*) cannot refer to Mary, and is taken by some commentators to refer to Jesus; and thus the meaning is that Mary gave birth to a son who received Divine inspiration. But the reference in the personal pronoun *him* might as well be to the believer for whom Mary is set as an example, and the object of the change might be to draw attention to the fact that it is really the granting of inspiration to the believer that is meant here and not the breathing of a soul.

CHAPTER 67

AL-MULK: THE KINGDOM

(*Mecca—2 sections; 30 verses*)

FROM here to the end there are forty-eight chapters, and all these were revealed at Mecca, with the single exception of ch. 110, which belongs to the Medina revelation, though it too was revealed at Mecca when the Holy Prophet was there on his last pilgrimage. All of them contain prophecies of the greatness to which Islam should rise and of the failure of its opponents, while ch. 110 shows their fulfilment. But while they mostly belong to the early Meccan period, the prophecies contained in them very often relate to the distant future of Islam, and each one of them deals with one particular subject. Thus, this chapter whose title is taken from the mention of the *Kingdom* of God in the first verse, speaks of the regularity and uniformity of *law*, and shows that it is by submission to Divine law alone that man can prosper, and that the violation of law must result in distress.

PART XXIX

SECTION 1.—The Kingdom of God

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things, 2 Who created death and life that He may try you[1]—which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving, 3 Who created the seven heavens alike; thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, canst thou see any disorder?[2] 4 Then turn back the eye again and again, thy look shall come back to thee confused while it is fatigued. 5 And We have adorned this lower heaven with lights and We have made them to be means of conjectures for the devils and We have prepared for them the chastisement of burning.[3] 6 And for those who

[1] The law of life and death or growth and decay works throughout nature, but it has a special meaning in reference to man, because death does not end his life, but is really the starting-point for a new life of spiritual progress. Life to him below is, therefore, a trial; i.e. a means of bringing to light his hidden qualifications for the performance of good.

[2] Attention is here called to the regularity and uniformity of the laws working in nature; neither is there incongruity, so that things belonging to the same class should be subject to different laws, nor is there a disorder so that a law should not work uniformly.

[3] The lights with which the lower heaven is lighted, i.e. the stars, are made the means of conjectures regarding the future by the astrologers.

disbelieve in their Lord is the chastisement of hell, and evil
is the resort.[1] 7 When they shall be cast therein, they
shall hear a loud moaning of it as it heaves, 8 Almost
bursting for fury. Whenever a group is cast into it, its
keepers shall ask them: Did there not come to you a
warner? 9 They shall say: Yea! indeed there came to
us a warner, but we rejected (him) and said: God has
not revealed anything; you are in naught but a great
error. 10 And they shall say: Had we but listened or
pondered, we should not have been among the inmates of
the burning fire. 11 And they shall own their faults, so
away with the inmates of the burning fire. 12 Those who
fear their Lord in secret shall have forgiveness and a great
reward. 13 And conceal your word or manifest it; He
is Cognizant of what is in the hearts. 14 Does He not
know Who created? And He is the Knower of the
subtleties, the Aware.

SECTION 2.—**The Opponents' Doom**

15 He it is Who made the earth smooth for you, so go
about in the spacious sides thereof, and eat of His sus-
tenance, and to Him is the return after death. 16 Are you
secure of Him Who is in the heaven that He should make
the earth to swallow you up? Then lo! it shall be in a
state of commotion.[2] 17 Or are you secure of Him Who
is in the heaven that He should send down upon you a
punishment? Then shall you know how was My warning.
18 And those before them rejected (the truth), then how
was My disapproval. 19 Have they not seen the birds
above them expanding (their wings) and contracting
(them)? What is it that withholds them save the Bene-
ficent God? Surely He sees everything. 20 Or who is
it that will be a host for you to assist you besides the
Beneficent God? The unbelievers are only in deception.

Rághib, explaining these very words, says: "And *rajm* is used metaphorically to signify conjectures and surmises." Thus the astrologers, who deceived people by telling them many things which they posed as having learned from the stars, are referred to here.

[1] Because they violate the moral laws of God.

[2] By *Him Who is in the heaven* is meant *He Whose command prevails in the heavens*, the reference to the command in the heaven indicating His power to deal out punishment which none would be able to avert.

21 Or who is it that will give you sustenance if He should
withhold His sustenance? Nay! they persist in disdain
and aversion. 22 What! is he who goes prone upon his
face better guided or he who walks upright upon a straight
path?[1] 23 Say: He it is Who brought you into being
and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts:
little is it that you give thanks. 24 Say: He it is Who
multiplies you in the earth and to Him you shall be
gathered. 25 And they say: When shall this threat be
(executed) if you are truthful? 26 Say: The knowledge
(thereof) is only with God and I am only a plain warner.
27 But when they shall see it nigh, the faces of those who
disbelieve shall be sorry, and it shall be said: This is
what you used to call for. 28 Say: Have you considered if
God should destroy me and those with me—rather He
will have mercy on us; yet who will protect the un-
believers from a painful chastisement? 29 Say: He is
the Beneficent God, we believe in Him and on Him do we
rely, so you shall come to know who it is that is in clear
error. 30 Say: Have you considered if your water
should go down, who is it then that will bring you flowing
water?

CHAPTER 68

AL-QALAM: THE PEN

(*Mecca—2 sections; 52 verses*)

THIS chapter takes its title from the mention of *pen* in the second verse, the inkstand and the pen, as representing the spread of knowledge in the world, being referred to here as witnesses to the moral greatness of the Holy Prophet. The idea which finds special mention in this chapter is that moral greatness can only be attained through communion with God while estrangement from Him leads to moral degeneration. Hence the chapter, while commencing with a mention of the moral eminence at which the Holy Prophet stood, ends with the statement that the Holy Quran was a source of eminence for the world.

SECTION 1.—Prophet's sublime Morals

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 (Consider) the inkstand and the pen and what they

[1] The former goes against the laws of God while the latter submits to them.

write, 2 By the grace of thy Lord thou art not mad.[1]
3 And thou shalt surely have a reward never to be cut off.
4 And thou dost conform (thyself) to sublime morality.[2]
5 So thou shalt see, and they (too) shall see, 6 Which of
you is afflicted with madness. 7 Thy Lord best knows
him who errs from His way, and He best knows the
followers of the right course. 8 Do not yield to the
rejecters. 9 They wish that thou shouldst be pliant, so
they (too) would be pliant.[3] 10 And yield not to any mean
swearer, 11 Defamer, going about with slander, 12 For-
bidder of good, outstepping the limits, sinful, 13 Ignoble,
besides all that, base-born; 14 Because he possesses
wealth and sons.[4] 15 When Our communications are
recited to him, he says: Stories of those of yore. 16 We
will brand him on the nose.[5] 17 We will try them as We
tried the owners of the garden, when they swore that they
would cut the produce in the morning,[6] 18 And were
not willing to set aside a portion (for the poor).[7] 19 Then
there encompassed it a visitation from thy Lord while
they were sleeping. 20 So it became as black, barren
land; 21 And they called out to each other in the morning,

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[1] By mentioning *the inkstand and the pen and what they write*, attention is called, in the first place, to prophecies about the future which were already put down in writing, and whose fulfilment would show that they were not the ravings of a madman; and secondly, to the fact that the Holy Quran will always continue to occupy a unique position among all the books which are ever written.

[2] This was not only an assertion, but the Holy Prophet had already won from his compatriots the recognition of his sublime morality, inasmuch as he had won the title of *Al-amin*, or *the one who may be trusted*, and by giving the Prophet that title the people expressed their high appreciation of his sublime morality. And Ayesha, his wife, is reported to have said: "*His morals are the Quran*," meaning that all pictures of sublime morality depicted by the Holy Quran afford really a glimpse of the moral greatness of the Prophet.

[3] The first desire of the Quraish was no doubt, owing to their great respect for the Holy Prophet, that he should not condemn their moral decrepitude in strong language, and thus they too would not be severe in opposition to him.

[4] This is, in fact, a picture of the moral degeneration of a people who cease to have a faith in God. Thus we have, on the one hand, mention of the moral sublimity of the man who held communion with God, and, on the other, of the moral falling off of those whose connection with God is entirely cut off.

[5] *Branding on the nose* is equivalent to *bringing a man to disgrace which will stick to him.*

[6] This is a parable which sets forth the ultimate fate of the Quraish.

[7] This shows that in the moral code of Islam regard for the poor is placed at the top.

22 Saying: Go early to your tilth if you would cut (the
produce). 23 So they went, while they consulted together
secretly, 24 Saying: No poor man shall enter it to-day
upon you. 25 And in the morning they went, having the
power to prevent. 26 But when they saw it, they said:
Surely we have gone astray: 27 Nay! we are made to
suffer privation. 28 The best of them said: Did I not
say to you, Why do you not glorify (God)? 29 They
said: Glory be to our Lord, indeed we were unjust.
30 Then some of them advanced against others, blaming
each other. 31 Said they: O woe to us! we were
inordinate: 32 Maybe, our Lord will give us instead one
better than it; to our Lord do we make our humble
petition.[1] 33 Such is the chastisement, and the chastise-
ment of the hereafter is certainly greater, did they but
know!

SECTION 2.—**A Reminder for the Nations**

34 The righteous shall have with their Lord gardens of
bliss. 35 What! shall We make those who submit as
the guilty? 36 What has happened to you? How do
you judge? 37 Or have you a book wherein you read,
38 That you have therein what you choose? 39 Or have
you received from Us an agreement confirmed by an oath
extending to the day of resurrection that you shall have
what you judge? 40 Ask them which of them will vouch
for that. 41 Or have they associates? Then let them
bring their associates if they are truthful. 42 On the day
when there shall be a severe affliction, and they shall be
called upon to make obeisance, but they shall not be able,
43 Their looks cast down, abasement shall overtake them;
and they were called upon to make obeisance indeed while
yet they were safe. 44 So leave Me and him who rejects
this announcement; We will overtake them by degrees,

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[1] It shows that while the Quran threatened the Meccans with punishment, it foretold at the same time that they would accept the truth ultimately. What is foretold here happened about twenty years afterwards during the conquest of Mecca. They lost what they had so long contended for against the Holy Prophet; all their exertions came to naught and their power in the land was frustrated, but they then saw their error, came over to Islam, and were made the rulers of vast kingdoms; thus their Lord gave them instead *one better*, because they made their humble petition to Him.

from whence they know not; 45 And I do bear with them,
surely My plan is firm. 46 Or dost thou ask from them
a reward, so that they are burdened with debt? 47 Or
have they (the knowledge of) the unseen, so that they
write (it) down?[1] 48 Wait patiently for the judgment of
thy Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish, when he
cried while he was in distress.[2] 49 Were it not that
favour from his Lord had overtaken him, he would have
been cast down upon the naked ground while he was
blamed. 50 Then his Lord chose him, and He made him
of the good ones. 51 And those who disbelieve would
almost smite thee with their eyes when they hear the
reminder, and they say: Surely he is mad. 52 And it
is naught but a reminder to the nations.

CHAPTER 69

AL-HÁQQAH: THE TRUTH

(*Mecca—2 sections; 52 verses*)

Al-Háqqah, or *the Truth*, which is spoken of in the first verse, and which gives its name to this chapter, is really the meting out of the reward to each of the two parties, one exerting itself for the establishment of the Truth and the other for its annihilation, and it is to this that the first section is devoted, while the second deals with the allegations that the prophet was a poet or a diviner or an impostor.

SECTION 1.—The great Truth

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The truth! 2 What is the truth! 3 And what
would make thee realize what the truth is![3] 4 Samood

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[1] Such verses are a clear proof that the Quran itself, containing as it did numerous prophecies, was written from the first, otherwise a challenge to the opponents in these early revelations to write down the knowledge of the future which they had through their diviners would be meaningless.

[2] The Prophet Jonah is here called the companion of the fish, because of the incident mentioned in 37:142.

[3] *Al-háqqah* is derived from the root *haqq*, meaning *the truth*, and is interpreted in several ways, in all of which the sense of the root word is present. Thus it is synonymous with *haqiqat*, meaning *truth*. It also signifies a *severe calamity the happening of which is fixed or established* or *the hour in which the truth shall be triumphant*. The commentators say that by this hour the resurrection is meant, but the triumph of truth is brought about in this world as well, and the instances of Ad, Samood, etc., do not leave the least doubt that the hour of the triumph of truth,

and Ad called the striking calamity a lie. 5 Then as to
Samood, they were destroyed by an excessively severe
punishment. 6 And as to Ad, they were destroyed by
a roaring, violent blast, 7 Which He made to prevail against
them for seven nights and eight days unintermittingly, so
that thou mightest have seen the people therein prostrate
as if they were the trunks of hollow palms. 8 Dost thou
see of them one remaining? 9 And Pharaoh and those
before him and the overthrown cities wrought evil. 10 And
they disobeyed the apostle of their Lord, so He punished
them with a vehement punishment. 11 We did bear you
up in the ship when the water rose high, 12 So that We
may make it a reminder to you, and that the retaining
ear might retain it. 13 And when the trumpet is blown
with a single blast, 14 And the earth and the mountains
are borne away and crushed with a single crushing, 15 On
that day shall the great event come to pass, 16 And the
heaven shall cleave asunder, so that on that day it shall
be frail, 17 And the angels shall be on the sides thereof;
and above them eight shall bear on that day thy Lord's
throne.[1] 18 On that day you shall be exposed to view
—no secret of yours shall remain hidden.[2] 19 Then as
for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will
say: Lo! read my book; 20 I knew that I shall meet
my account. 21 So he shall be in a life of pleasure, 22 In a
lofty garden, 23 The fruits of which are near at hand:
24 Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did beforehand
in the days gone by. 25 And as for him who is given his
book in his left hand, he shall say: O would that my book
had never been given me: 26 And I had not known what
my account was: 27 O would that it had made an end
(of me):[3] 28 My wealth has availed me nothing: 29 My

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which no doubt means the doom of its opponents, is primarily spoken of here, and to show its connection with the fuller manifestation of the truth, of the requital of the wicked and of the reward of the righteous, the day of resurrection is also spoken of immediately afterwards.

[1] The reference in *eight* bearers of the throne seems to be to the four chief attributes of the Divine Being mentioned in the opening chapter by which the world subsists, the number being doubled on account of a new manifestation of these attributes on the day of resurrection.

[2] This verse speaks clearly of the manifestation of the hidden realities on the day of resurrection.

[3] He would wish that death had made an end of him, *it* referring to *death*.

authority is gone away from me. 30 Lay hold on him,
then put a chain on him, 31 Then cast him into the burning
fire, 32 Then thrust him into a chain the length of which
is seventy cubits.[1] 33 For he did not believe in God, the
Great, 34 Nor did he urge the feeding of the poor.
35 Therefore he has not here to-day a true friend, 36 Nor
any food except refuse, 37 Which none but the wrong-
doers eat.

SECTION 2.—False Allegations refuted

38 But nay! I call to witness that which you see,
39 And that which you do not see; 40 Surely, it is the
word of an honoured Apostle, 41 And it is not the word
of a poet; little is it that you believe; 42 Nor the word
of a soothsayer; little is it that you mind. 43 It is a
revelation from the Lord of the worlds. 44 And if he had
fabricated against Us some of the sayings, 45 We would
have seized him by the right hand, 46 Then We would have
cut off his aorta. 47 And not one of you could have
withheld Us from him.[2] 48 And surely it is a reminder
for those who guard (against evil). 49 And surely We
know that some of you are rejecters. 50 And surely it
is a great grief to the unbelievers. 51 And surely it is the
true certainty. 52 Therefore glorify the name of thy
Lord, the Great.

CHAPTER 70

AL-MA'ĀRIJ: THE WAYS OF ASCENT

(*Mecca—2 sections; 44 verses*)

THE title of this chapter is taken from v. 3, where God is called the Lord of the *Ways of Ascent*. While holding out the certainty of the punishment in the clearest and most emphatic words, this chapter points out that the real aim of revelation is to show the

[1] It should be noted that in these verses the spiritual torture of this world is represented as a physical punishment in the next. The chain to be put upon the neck, for instance, represents the desires of this world, which keep a man with his head bent upon the earth, and it is these desires that will assume the shape of a chain. Similarly, the entanglements of this world will be seen as chains on the feet. The heart-burnings of this world will likewise be seen clearly as flames of burning fire. The seventy cubits of the chain represent the seventy years of man's life.

[2] This verse and the three preceding it show that one who fabricates Divine revelation does not prosper. Compare Deut. 18 : 20.

ways of ascent towards God, these ways being stated towards the close of the first section. The second section speaks very clearly of the disgrace which the opponents shall meet with, a new nation being raised in their place.

SECTION 1.—The Ways of Ascent to God

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 One demanding, demanded the chastisement which must befall 2 The unbelievers—there is none to avert it—3 From God, the Lord of the ways of Ascent.[1] 4 To Him ascend the angels and the spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years.[2] 5 Therefore endure with a goodly patience. 6 For they think it to be far off, 7 And We see it nigh. 8 On the day when the heaven shall be as molten brass, 9 And the mountains shall be as tufts of wool; 10 And friend shall not question of friend, 11 (Though) they shall be made to see each other. The guilty one would fain redeem himself from the chastisement of that day by his children, 12 And his wife and his brother, 13 And the nearest of his kinsfolk who gave him shelter, 14 And all those that are in the earth, (wishing) then (that) this might deliver him. 15 By no means! it is a flaming fire, 16 Dragging by the head; 17 It shall claim him who retreats and turns the back, 18 And amasses (wealth), then shuts (it) up. 19 Man is created of a hasty temperament; 20 Being greatly grieved when evil afflicts him, 21 And niggardly when good befalls him, 22 Except those who pray, 23 Those who are constant at their prayer, 24 And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion, 25 For him who begs and for him who is denied (good), 26 And those who accept the truth of the judgment day, 27 And those who are fearful of the chastisement of their Lord—28 Surely the chastisement of their Lord is (a thing) not to be felt secure of—29 And those who guard their private parts, 30 Except in the case of their wives or those whom their right hands possess—for these

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[1] The Divine Being is here stated to be the Lord of the ways of ascent as indicating that He points out the ways by which man may be exalted. (These means of exaltation are pointed out in vv. 22–35). But instead of accepting the truth, the unbelievers demand that punishment should come to them for rejecting the truth.

[2] The length of the day is simply to show how great the progress is which man can make, a day of that progress being equal to fifty thousand years.

surely are not to be blamed. 31 But whoever seeks to
go beyond this, these it is that exceed the limits—32 And
those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenant,
33 And those who are upright in their testimonies, 34 And
those who keep a guard on their prayer, 35 These shall be
in gardens, honoured.

SECTION 2.—A New Nation shall be raised up

36 But what is the matter with those who disbelieve
that they hasten on to thee, 37 On the right hand and on
the left, in sundry parties?[1] 38 Does every man of
them desire that he should be made to enter the garden
of bliss? 39 By no means! We have created them for
what they know.[2] 40 But nay! I call to witness the
Lord of the Easts and the Wests that We are certainly
able 41 To bring instead (others) better than them, and
We shall not be overcome. 42 Therefore leave them
alone to go on with their false discourses and to sport
until they come face to face with that day of theirs with
which they are threatened; 43 The day on which they
shall come forth from their graves in haste, as if they were
hastening on to a goal, 44 Their eyes cast down; disgrace
shall overtake them; that is the day which they were
threatened with.[3]

CHAPTER 71

NOAH

(*Mecca*—2 *sections*; 28 *verses*)

THE entire chapter is devoted to the preaching of Noah, after whom it is named, pointing out the way of man's eminence, and to his prayer that the transgressors may be destroyed, so that evil may not prosper on earth, the two subjects being dealt with respectively in the two sections.

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[1] It is a prophetical statement showing that time would come when those who disbelieve shall hasten on to the Prophet and believe in him.

[2] I.e. the object of their creation is to exalt them, but man cannot attain to high degrees by merely saying that he believes (v. 38). They can only be exalted by following the ways of ascent that have already been pointed out.

[3] This is a prophetical picture of the final defeat of the opponents of truth.

SECTION 1.—Noah's Preaching

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 We sent Noah to his people, saying: Warn thy
people before there come upon them a painful chastisement.
2 He said: O my people! I am a plain warner to you:
3 That you should serve God and be careful of (your duty
to) Him and obey me: 4 He will forgive you some of
your sins and grant you a delay to an appointed term;
for the term of God when it comes is not postponed: did
you but know! 5 He said: O my Lord! I have called
my people by night and by day: 6 But my call has only
made them flee the more: 7 And whenever I have called
them that Thou mayest forgive them, they put their fingers
in their ears and cover themselves with their garments,
and persist and are puffed up with pride: 8 Then I
called to them aloud: 9 Then I spoke to them in public
and I spoke to them in secret: 10 Then I said, Ask
forgiveness of your Lord, for He is the most Forgiving:
11 He sends down upon you the cloud, pouring down
abundance of rain: 12 And helps you with wealth and
sons, and makes for you gardens and makes for you rivers.
13 What is the matter with you that you hope not for
greatness from God? [1] 14 And indeed He has created you
through various grades.[2] 15 Do you not see how God
has created the seven heavens alike, 16 And made the
moon therein a light, and made the sun a lamp? 17 And
God has made you grow out of the earth as a growth,
18 Then He returns you to it, then will He bring you
forth a (new) bringing forth. 19 And God has made for
you the earth a wide expanse, 20 That you may go along
therein in wide paths.

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[1] The words may be taken either as a continuation of Noah's preaching or as being addressed by the Prophet. Even in the former case, the Meccans are told in the story of Noah that if they follow the Prophet they will be made a great nation.

[2] The words may be taken as alluding to the theory of evolution. The commentators generally take them to refer to the various conditions through which the fœtus passes. But they may as well imply that man has been brought to the present state of physical perfection after passing through various conditions.

SECTION 2.—**Noah's Prayer**

21 Noah said: My Lord! they disobey me and follow him whose wealth and children have added to him nothing but loss.
22 And they have planned a very great plan.
23 And they say: By no means leave your gods, nor leave Wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghus, and Ya'uq and Nasr.[1]
24 And they have led astray many, and do not increase the unjust in aught but perdition.
25 Because of their wrongs they were drowned, then made to enter fire, so they did not find any helpers besides God.
26 And Noah said: My Lord! leave not upon the land any dweller from among the unbelievers:
27 For if Thou leave them they will lead astray Thy servants, and will not beget any but immoral, ungrateful (children):
28 My Lord! forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, and the believing men and the believing women; and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction!

CHAPTER 72

THE JINN

(*Mecca—2 sections; 28 verses*)

THE revelation of this chapter is generally ascribed to the time of the Holy Prophet's return from Taif, which took place two years before the Hejira, and thus the chapter belongs to a time when opposition had reached its climax. The Quraish were deaf to all preaching and warning, and the visit to Taif was even more disappointing. Under these circumstances an assurance was sorely needed, and a very emphatic assurance is given in this chapter. But beyond an assurance, we are told here that if the Arabs persisted in unbelief, Islam was making spiritual conquests outside Arabia, for the jinn spoken of here seem to have been some foreigners.

SECTION 1.—**Foreign Believers**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: It has been revealed to me that a party of the jinn listened, and they said: We have heard a wonderful

[1] There is no anachronism here, as there is reason to believe that the Arabs obtained most of their idols from foreign countries. Thus Hubal, the chief Arab idol in the Ka'ba, was brought from Belka in Syria, while Usaf and Naila are also said to have been brought from Syria.

Quran,[1] 2 Guiding to the right way, so we believe in it,
and we will not set up any one with our Lord: 3 And
that He—exalted be the majesty of our Lord—has not
taken a consort, nor a son: 4 And that the foolish
amongst us used to forge extravagant things against God:
5 And that we thought that men and jinn did not utter
a lie against God: 6 And that persons from among men
used to seek refuge with persons from among jinn, so they
increased them in wrong-doing: 7 And that they thought,
as you think, that God would not raise any one: 8 And
that we sought to reach heaven,[2] but we found it filled with
strong guards and flames: 9 And that we used to sit in
some of the sitting-places thereof to steal a hearing, but
he who would (try to) listen now would find a flame lying
in wait for him: 10 And that we know not whether evil
is meant for those who are on earth or whether their Lord
means to direct them aright: 11 And that some of us
are good and others of us are below that: we are sects
following different ways: 12 And that we know that we
cannot escape God in the earth, nor can we escape Him
by flight: 13 And that when we heard the guidance, we
believed in it; so whoever believes in his Lord, he should
neither fear loss nor being overtaken (by disgrace):
14 And that some of us are those who submit, and some
of us are the deviators; and whoever submits, these aim
at the right way: 15 And as to the deviators, they are
the fuel of hell: 16 And that if they should keep to the
(right) way, We would give them to drink of abundant
water, 17 So that We might try them with respect to it;
and whoever turns aside from the reminder of his Lord,
He will make him enter into an afflicting chastisement:

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[1] The existence of *jinn*, or ethereal beings like the *angels* (the former being the spirits of evil and the latter the spirits of good), is a question quite distinct, but it is clear that the jinn spoken of here did not belong to this class. I have already shown in commenting on 46:29–31 that the word *jinn* is there applied to foreigners who believed in the Holy Quran. As stated there the *jinn* spoken of there were Jews, while from what is stated here it appears that these jinn were Christians. The statement made here may, however, be merely prophetical, indicating that Christians would also believe in the Holy Prophet's message.

[2] By *reaching heaven* is meant *learning secrets of the heaven or news of the future.* It shows that there were diviners and astrologers among them who thought that they could read the secrets of the future from the stars. The reference in *strong guards* is to the inaccessibility of the secrets of the future and in *flames* to their failures. The next verse refers to their failure especially in opposition to the Holy Prophet.

18 And that the mosques are God's, therefore call not upon
any one with God:[1] 19 And that when the servant of
God stood up calling upon Him, they well-nigh crowded
him (to death).

SECTION 2.—Protection of Revelation

20 Say: I only call upon my Lord, and I do not
associate any one with Him. 21 Say: I do not control
for you evil or good. 22 Say: No one can protect me
against God, nor can I find besides Him any place of
refuge: 23 (It is) only a delivering (of communications)
from God and His messages; and whoever disobeys God
and His Apostle, he shall have the fire of hell, to abide
therein for long ages. 24 Until when they see what they
are threatened with, they shall know who is weaker in
helpers and fewer in number.[2] 25 Say: I do not know
whether that with which you are threatened be nigh or
whether my Lord will appoint for it a term. 26 The
Knower of the unseen! He does not reveal His secrets
to any, 27 Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle,[3]
for He makes a guard to march before him and after him,
28 So that He may know that they have truly delivered
the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is
with them and He records the number of all things.

CHAPTER 73

AL-MUZZAMMIL: THE WRAPPED UP

(*Mecca—2 sections; 20 verses*)

THE chapter receives its title from the Holy Prophet's description in the first verse as one who had *wrapped up* himself, as signifying one who had prepared himself for prayer. The chapter opens with

[1] The reference to mosques where only men pray clearly shows that these jinn belonged to the human race. V. 16 also leads to the same conclusion.

[2] A solitary man left to himself without a friend, without helper, rejected at home and cruelly treated abroad (as he was at Taif, to which period this chapter belongs), could not speak these words.

[3] The *secrets* spoken of here refer particularly to the expression of the Divine will, to what are called the *messages* of their Lord in the next verse, being the commandments revealed through the prophets. A prophecy is not properly a message, and therefore prophecies are granted to non-prophets as well, and therefore though there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, prophecies are granted to his righteous followers to confirm the truth of the Quran.

an injunction to the Holy Prophet to pass the night in prayer, ending with a general injunction to all believers to be ever mindful of prayer. Thus it is through prayer, we are told here, that the Holy Prophet attained to perfection, and through prayer that the faithful can attain to perfection. In the order of revelation, it is the third, being revealed after the one that follows it.

SECTION 1.—The Prophet is enjoined to pray

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O thou who hast wrapped up thyself![1] 2 Rise to
pray in the night except a little, 3 Half of it, or lessen it
a little, 4 Or add to it, and recite the Quran well-arranged.
5 Surely We will make to light upon thee a weighty word.[2]
6 The rising by night is the firmest way to tread and the
best corrective of speech.[3] 7 For thou hast in the day-
time a long occupation. 8 And remember the name of thy
Lord and devote thyself to Him with (exclusive) devotion.
9 The Lord of the East and the West—there is no god
but He—so take Him for a protector. 10 And bear
patiently what they say and avoid them with a becoming
avoidance. 11 And leave me and the rejecters, the pos-
sessors of ease and plenty, and respite them a little.
12 With Us are heavy fetters and a flaming fire, 13 And
food that chokes and a painful chastisement. 14 On the
day when the earth and the mountains shall quake and
the mountains shall become (as) heaps of sand let loose.
15 We have sent to you an Apostle, a witness against you,
as We sent an apostle to Pharaoh.[4] 16 But Pharaoh

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[1] The Prophet is here called *Muzzammi*, or *one who has wrapped up himself*. The ordinary explanation is that the Holy Prophet had wrapped himself up in clothes on receiving his first revelation, or a call to messengership. But various other explanations are given: *one who considers an affair to be easy, one who prepared himself for prayer, one who was burdened with a great affair*. In all its senses, and particularly in the last mentioned, every follower is addressed through the Holy Prophet.

[2] Being burdened with the guidance of the whole world was indeed a weighty word.

[3] A reason is here given for maintaining a prayerful attitude during the night. It is the *firmest way to tread*, i.e. to tread every evil under the feet, and the *best corrective of speech*, and thus it accomplishes correction of deeds as well as correction of speech.

[4] The Holy Prophet's likeness to Moses is stated in the clearest terms in this, one of the earliest revelations, and thus the Holy Prophet's claim to be the promised prophet of Deut. 18 : 18, who is expressly stated to be the "*like*" of Moses, is as old as his revelation. Is it not wonderful in the

disobeyed the apostle, so We laid on him a violent hold.
17 How, then, will you guard yourselves, if you disbelieve,
on the day which shall make children grey-headed?
18 The heaven shall rend asunder thereby; His promise
is ever brought to fulfilment.[1] 19 Surely this is a reminder,
so let him, who will, take the way to his Lord.

SECTION 2.—Prayer enjoined on Muslims

20 Thy Lord knows that thou passest in prayer nearly two-thirds of the night and (sometimes) half of it, and (sometimes) a third of it, and (also) a party of those with thee; and God measures the night and the day. He knows that you are not able to do it, so He has turned to you (mercifully), therefore read so much of the Quran as you find easy; He knows that there must be among you sick, and others who travel in the land seeking of the bounty of God, and others who fight in God's way, therefore read as much of it as you find easy, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and set apart for God a goodly portion; and whatever of good you send on beforehand for yourselves, you will find it with God, best and greatest in reward; and ask forgiveness of God, for God is Forgiving, Merciful.

CHAPTER 74

AL-MUDDASSIR: THE CLOTHED ONE

(*Mecca—2 sections; 56 verses*)

THE previous chapter tells the Prophet how to attain to perfection. Here he is told to get out of solitude so as to make others perfect by warning them of the evil consequences of evil, and by pointing out to them the ways of purification. It is the second in order of revelation.

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case of one who had never read the Torah? Hence it is that the Holy Quran is in all later revelations described as *verifying what is before it*, or coming in fulfilment of earlier prophecy, the truth of which is thus confirmed.

[1] Whether the doom of the Quraish is spoken of here or the day of Resurrection, or both, the making of the children grey-headed is undoubtedly an allegorical expression, and the rending asunder of heaven may also be taken as such.

SECTION 1.—The Prophet is enjoined to warn

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 O thou who art clothed ! [1] 2 Arise and warn, 3 And
thy Lord do magnify, 4 And thy garments keep purified,[2]
5 And uncleanness do shun, 6 And bestow not favours
that thou mayest receive again with increase, 7 And for
the sake of thy Lord, be patient. 8 For when the trumpet
is sounded, 9 That, at that time, shall be a difficult day
10 For the unbelievers, anything but easy. 11 Leave Me
and him whom I created alone, 12 And gave him vast
riches, 13 And sons dwelling in his presence, 14 And I
adjusted affairs for him adjustably ; 15 And yet he desires
that I should add more ! 16 By no means ! he offers
opposition to Our communications. 17 I will make a dis-
tressing punishment overtake him. 18 For he reflected
and determined, 19 But may he be cursed how he deter-
mined ; 20 Again, may he be cursed how he determined ;
21 Then he looked, 22 Then he frowned and scowled,
23 Then he turned back and was big with pride, 24 And
said : This is naught but enchantment, narrated (from
others) ; [3] 25 This is naught but the word of a mortal.
26 I will cast him into hell. 27 And what will make thee
realize what hell is ? 28 It leaves naught nor does it
spare aught. 29 It alters the mortal. 30 Over it are
nineteen.[4] 31 And We have not made the guardians of
the fire others than angels, and We have not made their
number but as a trial for those who disbelieve, that those

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[1] *Al-muddassir* is one wearing a *disár*, i.e. *any garment.* Some take the word literally, others metaphorically, the meaning according to the latter being *one clad in the garments of prophethood* or *one obscure.*

[2] *Táhir us siyáb* or *one having pure garments* was according to the Arabs *one who kept his promise and made peace between men*, and hence the injunction here relates not only to the outward act of purification but also to the purification of the heart.

[3] It is taken to refer to Walid bin Mughira, who after rejecting the different conjectures as to the Prophet being a poet, a soothsayer, a mad man, declared that after deeply pondering over the question he had come to the conclusion that the Holy Prophet was an enchanter, and his suggestion was accepted and a declaration made to that effect in the streets of Mecca. These verses are undoubtedly a later revelation, but they belong to the early Meccan period.

[4] It should be noted that this is called a *parable* in the next verse. All that the Quran says is that *over it are nineteen.* The commentators think that nineteen angels, or nineteen classes, or nineteen ranks may be meant. The particular number is considered to be due to the abuse of nineteen faculties.

who have been given the Book may be certain and those who believe may increase in faith, and those who have been given the Book and the believers may not doubt, and that those in whose hearts is a disease and the unbelievers may say: What does God mean by this parable? Thus does God leave in error whom He pleases and He guides whom He pleases, and none knows the hosts of thy Lord but He Himself; and this is naught but a reminder to the mortals.

SECTION 2.—The Warning

32 Nay! consider the moon.[1] 33 And the night when
it departs, 34 And the daybreak when it shines; 35 Surely
it is one of the gravest (misfortunes), 36 A warning to
mortals, 37 To him among you who wishes to go forward
or remain behind. 38 Every soul is held in pledge for
what it earns, 39 Except the people of the right hand.
40 In gardens, they shall ask each other 41 About the
guilty: 42 What has brought you into hell? 43 They
shall say: We were not of those who prayed; 44 And
we used not to feed the poor; 45 And we used to enter
into vain discourse with those who entered into vain dis-
courses; 46 And we used to call the day of judgment a
lie; 47 Till death overtook us.[2] 48 So the intercession of
intercessors shall not avail them. 49 What is then the
matter with them, that they turn aside from the reminder,
50 As if they were asses taking fright 51 That had fled
from a lion? 52 Nay! every one of them desires that
he may be given pages spread out;[3] 53 Nay! but they
do not fear the hereafter. 54 Nay! it is a reminder.
55 So whoever pleases may mind it. 56 And they will
not mind unless God please.[4] He is worthy to be feared
and worthy to forgive.

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[1] The *moon* represents the power of the Arabs. The *night* in the next verse represents the ignorance in which the Arabs were involved: this ignorance would pass away, but along with it would also pass away the power of the Meccans. The light of truth would shine forth, but not without a grave misfortune to those who refuse to go forward, and this is a warning.

[2] The word in the original is *yaqín*, which means *certainty*. Death, being certain, is so called.

[3] I.e. every one of them would have a revelation granted to him direct from heaven.

[4] God is pleased to guide those in the right way and to make those "mind" who open their hearts to receive the truth. The *pleasure of God* is itself a *law*, not an arbitrary thing, so that He should turn away those from minding who are anxious to receive the truth.

CHAPTER 75

AL-QIYÂMAH: THE RESURRECTION

(*Mecca—2 sections; 40 verses*)

THIS chapter continues the subject dealt with at the end of the last, namely, that the Quran is a reminder which will raise to eminence those who follow it. This spiritual *Resurrection*, which gives its name to this chapter, is cited as a proof of the great resurrection. The chapter thus speaks of the rising to life of the dead.

SECTION 1.—The Truth of the Resurrection

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Nay! I call to witness the day of resurrection.
2 Nay! I call to witness the self-accusing spirit.[1] 3 Does
man think that We shall not gather his bones? 4 Yea!
We are able to make complete his very fingers.[2] 5 Nay!
man desires to give the lie to what is before him. 6 He
asks: When is the day of resurrection? 7 When the
sight becomes confused, 8 And the moon becomes dark,
9 And the sun and the moon are brought together,[3]
10 Man shall say on that day: Whither to flee to?
11 By no means! there shall be no place of refuge!
12 With thy Lord alone shall on that day be the place of
rest. 13 Man shall on that day be informed of what he
sent before and (what he) put off.[4] 14 Nay! man is

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[1] The primary significance of *qiyámah* is only *rising*, and therefore by the resurrection is here meant the spiritual resurrection of the Arabs, as also the greater Resurrection. The spiritual rising of Arabia at the Prophet's voice is here stated to be an evidence of the greater resurrection. The *self-accusing spirit* explains this, for it is the first sign of spiritual life in man. By the self-accusing spirit is meant the condition of man when he begins his struggle against evil, so that his inner self accuses him of having done wrong when he commits an evil deed. This is the first stage of the growth of spiritual life in man, the second or the higher stage being that which is called the *spirit at rest* (89 : 27) when the spiritual life becomes so highly developed that man overcomes all evil tendencies and the struggle of evil ceases.

[2] In the make of his fingers lies the superiority of man. The gathering of bones in the previous verse is not to be taken literally, because the bones are elsewhere declared as becoming dust.

[3] I.e. both become dark. Some commentators consider these to be the signs of the approach of death.

[4] *What he sent before* implies the evil deeds which he did but ought not to have done; *what he put off* being the good deeds which he failed to do but which he ought to have done

evidence against himself. 15 Though he puts forth his
excuses.[1] 16 Do not move thy tongue with it to make
haste with it.[2] 17 Surely on Us (devolves) the collecting
of it and the reciting of it.[3] 18 Therefore when We have
recited it, follow its recitation. 19 Again on Us (devolves)
the explaining of it.[4] 20 Nay! but you love the present
life, 21 And neglect the hereafter. 22 (Some) faces on
that day shall be bright, 23 Looking to their Lord; 24 And
(other) faces on that day shall be gloomy, 25 Knowing that
there will be made to befall them some great calamity.
26 Nay! when it comes up to the throat, 27 And it is
said: Who will be a physician?[5] 28 And he is sure
that it is the (hour of) parting, 29 And affliction is com-
bined with affliction; 30 To thy Lord on that day shall
be the driving.

SECTION 2.—The Dead shall rise

31 So he did not accept the truth, nor did he pray,
32 But called the truth a lie and turned back, 33 Then he
went to his followers, walking away in haughtiness.
34 Woe to thee and woe. 35 Again, woe to thee and woe.[6]
36 Does man think that he is to be left to wander without
an aim?[7] 37 Was he not a small life-germ in the seminal

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[1] Man being evidence against himself signifies that he is able to distinguish between right and wrong; but he always "puts forth excuses" for leaving the right and adopting the wrong course.

[2] The preceding verses speak of the distress which must befall those who do not forsake the wrong course. The Prophet naturally desired to make it clear to them, and therefore he was anxious that the warning should be given immediately in plainer words. Hence the statements made in the verses that follow, viz. that the recitation and collection of the whole of the Quran, together with its effective explanation to the opponents, were matters which God had decided to bring about, and the Prophet should have no anxiety on that account.

[3] There can be no clearer evidence that the collection of the verses into chapters and of the chapters into one whole is here claimed by the Quran to be a matter which, like its revelation, was to be entirely carried out under Divine guidance by the Holy Prophet himself. The Holy Book was thus from the first intended to be arranged and collected into one whole.

[4] The explanations that the Prophet gave were therefore given under Divine guidance.

[5] I.e. no physician can then heal him.

[6] The expression is repeated to show that there is a double punishment in store, in this life and hereafter.

[7] The verse draws attention to the seriousness of life and to man's responsibility for his actions—a doctrine denied as much to-day as it was by the Arabs.

elements, 38 Then he was a clot of blood, so He created
(him) and made (him) perfect. 39 Then He made of him
two kinds, the male and the female. 40 Is not He able
to give life to the dead ?

CHAPTER 76

AL-INSÂN : THE MAN

(*Mecca—2 sections ; 31 verses*)

THE last chapter having shown the truth of the resurrection which stands for the spiritual life of man, this deals with man's attainment to perfection, which is the true object of that life, and is accordingly called *The Man*, the word itself occurring in the opening verse of the chapter. It is here shown that in the attainment of perfection there are two stages, the first stage being the perfect suppression of all evil tendencies or the stage of attaining to sinlessness, but this is not the goal to which the spiritual wayfarer should aspire. The goal lies far beyond. It is the way uphill, as it is termed elsewhere and briefly hinted here. The pilgrim must be prepared to accomplish the most difficult tasks and to perform astonishing deeds of sacrifice in the way of God. The opinion that it is a Medina revelation is wrong.

SECTION 1.—**Attainment of Perfection**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 There surely came over man a period of time when he
was not a thing that could be spoken of. 2 We have
created man from a small life-germ by union (of the sexes) :
We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing.
3 We have shown him the way : he may be thankful or
unthankful. 4 We have prepared for the unbelievers
chains and shackles and a burning fire. 5 The righteous
surely drink of a cup the admixture of which is camphor,[1]
6 A fountain from which the servants of God drink ; they
make it to flow a (goodly) flowing forth. 7 They fulfil

[1] The word *kâfur*, used in connection with the state of the just, is derived from *kafr*, meaning *to cover* and *to suppress*, and refers to the total extinction of worldly love and the complete suppression of all the worldly desires of those who have drunk of the cup of love of God. In the spiritual advancement of man this is the first stage, because it is not until the evil tendencies of man are completely suppressed that he is able to advance to the higher stages of spiritual perfection. Sinlessness, according to the Holy Quran, is not the goal of perfection, but only the first stage of the way to that goal.

vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading
far and wide. 8 And they give food out of love for Him
to the poor and the orphan and the captive: 9 We only
feed you for God's sake; we desire from you neither
reward nor thanks: 10 For we fear from our Lord a
stern, distressful day. 11 So God will guard them from
the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and
happiness; 12 And reward them, because they were
patient, with garden and silk, 13 Reclining therein on
raised couches, they shall see therein neither sun nor
intense cold. 14 And close down upon them (shall be)
its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them),
being easy to reach. 15 And there shall be made to go
round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are
of glass, 16 (Transparent as) glass, made of silver; they
have measured them according to a measure. 17 And
they shall be made to drink therein a cup the admixture
of which shall be ginger,[1] 18 (Of) a fountain therein which
is named Salsabil. 19 And round about them shall go
youths never altering in age; when thou seest them thou
wilt think them to be pearls scattered broadcast. 20 And
when thou seest there, thou shalt see blessings and a great
kingdom. 21 Upon them shall be garments of fine green
silk and thick silk interwoven with gold, and they shall
be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall
make them drink a pure drink. 22 This is a reward for
you and your striving shall be recompensed.

SECTION 2.—A New Generation

23 We Ourselves have revealed the Quran to thee,
revealing (it) in portions. 24 Therefore wait patiently for
the judgment of thy Lord, and obey not from among them
a sinner or an ungrateful one. 25 And glorify the name
of thy Lord morning and evening; 26 And during part of
the night adore Him, and give glory to Him (a) long (part
of the) night. 27 Surely these love the transitory and
neglect a grievous day before them. 28 We created them
and made firm their make, and when We please We will

[1] This is the second stage, in the spiritual growth of man when, after the evil tendencies are suppressed, he acquires the strength (for which *ginger* stands here) to scale the spiritual heights.

bring in their place the likes of them by a change. 29 This
is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way.
30 And you do not please except that God please;[1] for
God is Knowing, Wise; 31 He makes whom He pleases
to enter into His mercy; and for the unjust He has prepared
a painful chastisement.

CHAPTER 77

AL-MURSALĀT: THE SENT FORTH

(*Mecca—2 sections; 50 verses*)

THIS chapter is, as it were, a supplement to the one that precedes it, for while it is shown therein how the righteous attain to perfection—being the accepters of the message—here the fate of the rejecters is made clear. The *Sent forth* are the apostles, the rejection of whose message brings evil consequences, and that word, occurring in the first verse, gives its name to this chapter.

SECTION 1.—Consequences of Rejection

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider those that are sent forth with goodness,
2 Then those that drive off the chaff, 3 And those that
spread (the seed of goodness) far and wide, 4 Then those
that make a distinction, 5 Then those that offer the
reminder, 6 To clear or to warn:[2] 7 What you are
threatened with must come to pass. 8 When the stars
are made to disappear, 9 And when the heaven is rent
asunder, 10 And when the mountains are carried away as
dust, 11 And when the apostles are made to reach their
appointed time, 12 To what day is the doom fixed?

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[1] As the context clearly shows, the faithful are spoken of here; the previous verse states that *whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way*, and the verse that follows refers to the faithful in the words, *He makes whom He pleases to enter into His mercy*. The meaning is that true and sincere believers have so completely submitted themselves to the Divine will and are so completely resigned that they have no desire of their own, and all their desires are in accordance with God's pleasure.

[2] The opponents of the Holy Prophet are told that they should consider how the truth was spread by former prophets. In the first verse they are spoken of as being sent with *goodness*; in the second, as "driving off the chaff" of falsehood before them; in the third, as scattering the seed of goodness far and wide or giving life to dead earth; in the fourth, as ultimately bringing about a distinction between truth and falsehood, and they give the reminder that one party may be cleared and the other warned.

13 To the day of decision. 14 And what will make thee
comprehend what the day of decision is? 15 Woe on
that day to the rejecters. 16 Did We not destroy the
former generations? 17 Then did We follow them up
with later ones. 18 Even thus shall We deal with the
guilty. 19 Woe on that day to the rejecters. 20 Did
We not create you from contemptible water? 21 Then
We placed it in a secure resting-place, 22 Till an appointed
term, 23 So We proportion it—how well are We at pro-
portioning (things). 24 Woe on that day to the rejecters.
25 Have We not made the earth to draw together to itself
26 The living and the dead; 27 And made therein lofty
mountains, and given you to drink of sweet water?
28 Woe on that day to the rejecters. 29 Walk on to
that which you called a lie. 30 Walk on to the covering
having three branches,[1] 31 Neither having the coolness of
the shade nor availing against the flame. 32 It sends up
sparks like palaces, 33 As if they were tawny camels.
34 Woe on that day to the rejecters. 35 This is the day
on which they shall not speak, 36 And permission shall
not be given to them so that they should offer excuses.
37 Woe on that day to the rejecters. 38 This is the day
of decision: We have gathered you and those of yore,
39 So if you have a plan, plan against me (now). 40 Woe
on that day to the rejecters.

SECTION 2.—Consequences of Rejection

41 The righteous shall be amid shades and fountains
42 And fruits such as they desire. 43 Eat and drink
pleasantly because of what you did. 44 Thus do We
reward the doers of good. 45 Woe on that day to the
rejecters. 46 Eat and enjoy yourselves for a while; for
you are guilty. 47 Woe on that day to the rejecters.
48 And when it is said to them, Bow down, they do not
bow down. 49 Woe on that day to the rejecters. 50 In
what announcement, then, after it, will they believe?

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[1] It is most likely that by the three branches of the covering of fire are meant its three characteristics stated in the verses that follow; viz. that *it gives no shade and does not avail against the flames and itself sends up sparks*. The sparks are likened to *qasr*, i.e. *palaces*, and to *tawny camels* in colour, signifying that it is inordinate love of these things that will take the shape of such sparks on the day of resurrection.

CHAPTER 78

AN-NABA: THE ANNOUNCEMENT

(Mecca—2 sections; 40 verses)

THE doom of the unbelievers being certain, they ask, When will it come? This doom is the *Announcement* which gives its title to, and forms the subject-matter of, this chapter.

PART XXX

SECTION 1.—The Day of Decision

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Of what do they ask one another? 2 Of the great
announcement,[1] 3 About which they differ? 4 Nay!
they shall soon come to know; 5 Nay! nay! they shall
soon know. 6 Have We not made the earth an even
expanse? 7 And the mountains as projections (thereon)?
8 And We created you in pairs, 9 And We made your
sleep to be rest (to you), 10 And We made the night to
be a covering, 11 And We made the day for seeking liveli-
hood. 12 And We made above you seven strong ones,
13 And We made a shining lamp,[2] 14 And We send down
from the clouds water pouring forth vehemently, 15 That
We may bring forth thereby corn and herbs, 16 And gardens,
dense and luxuriant. 17 The day of decision is (a day)
appointed: 18 The day on which the trumpet shall be
blown so you shall come forth in hosts, 19 And the heaven
shall be opened so that it shall be all openings, 20 And
the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain
a mere semblance. 21 Hell indeed lies in wait, 22 A place
of resort for the inordinate, 23 Living therein for long
years.[3] 24 They shall not taste therein cool nor drink,

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[1] This *great announcement* is the prophecy of the utter discomfiture of the opponents of the Holy Prophet; see 38:67. Some commentators take it to signify the Holy Quran, others the prophethood of Muhammad, and still others the day of resurrection.

[2] The *seven strong ones* of the previous verse are apparently the seven major planets of the solar system, the words *above you* clearly showing that the earth itself belongs to the same class, and the sun, the centre of the solar system, is spoken of in the words *a shining lamp*.

[3] *Huqub*, of which *ahqab* is a plural, denotes *eighty years*, or *seventy years*, or *a year* or *years*, or *a long time*. Whatever significance may be adopted, the use of the word leaves no doubt that the punishment of hell

25 But boiling and intensely cold water, 26 Requital
corresponding. 27 For they feared not the account,
28 And called Our communications a lie, giving the lie
(to the truth). 29 And We have recorded everything in
a book ; 30 So taste ! for We will not add to you aught
but chastisement.

SECTION 2.—The Day of Decision

31 For the righteous is achievement, 32 Gardens and
vineyards, 33 And those showing freshness of youth,
equals in age, 34 And a pure cup. 35 They shall not
hear therein any vain words nor lying. 36 A reward from
thy Lord, a gift according to a reckoning : 37 The Lord
of the heavens and the earth and what is between them,
the Beneficent God, they shall not be able to address Him.
38 The day on which the spirit and the angels shall stand
in ranks ;[1] they shall not speak except he whom the
Beneficent God permits and who speaks the right thing.
39 That is the sure day, so whoever desires may take
refuge with his Lord. 40 We have warned you of a chas-
tisement near at hand : the day when man shall see what
his two hands have sent before, and the unbeliever shall
say : O ! would that I were dust !

CHAPTER 79

AN-NÂZI'ÂT : THE DRAWERS

(*Mecca—2 sections ; 46 verses*)

THIS chapter receives its title from the description of the believers as *drawing forth* to the full, the reference being to the later wars and the drawing of bows, thus indicating that the fall of the unbelievers, their doom, with which the last chapter deals, was to be brought about in wars. The fate of Pharaoh, who was drowned

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shall not continue for an unlimited time. The use of a word which signifies a limited period in the case of the punishment of hell, while such a word is never used regarding the bliss of heavenly life, is a clear indication that the latter shall never come to an end, while the former shall.

[1] The spirit (*rúh*) stands here for those righteous servants of God who shall intercede for others.

while pursuing the Israelites, is referred to, while the second section, after recounting Divine benefits, speaks of the certainty of the punishment, here as well as hereafter.

SECTION 1.—The Great Commotion

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider those that draw forth to the full, 2 And those
that go forth briskly, 3 And those that run swiftly, 4 Then
those who are foremost, going ahead, 5 Then those who
regulate the affair.[1] 6 The day on which the quaking one
shall quake, 7 What must happen afterwards shall follow
it.[2] 8 Hearts on that day shall palpitate, 9 Their eyes
cast down. 10 They say: Shall we indeed be restored
to (our) first state? 11 What! when we are rotten
bones? 12 They say: This then would be a return bring-
ing loss. 13 But it shall be only a single cry, 14 When
lo! they shall be wakeful. 15 Has not there come to thee
the story of Moses? 16 When his Lord called upon him
in the holy valley, Tuwa: 17 Go to Pharaoh; he has
become inordinate; 18 And say: Hast thou (a desire)
to purify thyself: 19 And I will guide thee to thy Lord
so that thou shouldst fear. 20 And he showed him the
mighty sign; 21 But he rejected (the truth) and dis-
obeyed; 22 Then he went back hastily, 23 And gathered
(men) and called out, 24 And said: I am your Lord, the
most High. 25 But God seized him with the punishment

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[1] The commencement of the early Meccan suras very often refers prophetically to later Medina events, the occurrence of which served as a proof of the truth of the statements made. *Those that draw forth to the full* are *the archers*, *those that go forth briskly* are *the arrows*, *those that run swiftly and go ahead* are *the horses*, *and those that regulate the affair* are *either the angels or the leaders who have control*, *the affair* undoubtedly being *the victory of the Muslims and the defeat of the enemy*, as the subsequent verses show. But the words may as well refer to spiritual progress or to success in any affair generally; in the first case the drawers being those who draw themselves forth from lust, then walk on briskly towards God (v. 2) and so on; in the second case the first stage is that of going deep into a matter (from *gharq* meaning *sinking*), the second is that of handling it cheerfully, the third is that of being swift in action; the result is that such persons go ahead of others (v. 4) and are able to manage affairs (v. 5).

[2] The quaking of the earth stands for the great commotions that take place before the transformation is wrought, and what happens afterwards is the consequence or the doom of the opponents and the triumph of the faithful.

of the hereafter and the former life. 26 Surely there is in this a lesson to him who fears.

SECTION 2.—The Great Calamity

27 Are you the stronger in creation or the heaven?
He made it. 28 He raised high its height, then put it
into a right good state, 29 And He made dark its night
and brought out its light. 30 And the earth, He expanded
it after that. 31 He brought forth from it its water and
its pasturage. 32 And the mountains, He made them
firm, 33 A provision for you and for your cattle. 34 But
when the great predominating calamity[1] comes; 35 The
day on which man shall recollect what he strove after,
36 And the hell shall be made manifest to him who sees.
37 Then as for him who is inordinate, 38 And prefers the
life of this world, 39 Surely hell is (his) abode. 40 And as
for him who fears to stand in the presence of his Lord and
forbids the soul from low desires, 41 Surely the garden is
(his) abode. 42 They ask thee about the hour, whither
is its destination? 43 About what! thou art one to
remind of it. 44 To thy Lord is the goal of it. 45 Thou
art only a warner to him who would fear it. 46 On the
day that they see it, it will be as though they had not
tarried but the latter part of a day or the early part of it.

CHAPTER 80

'ABASA: HE FROWNED

(*Mecca—42 verses*)

OPENING with a touching incident as to how a blind man interfered with the Holy Prophet's conversation with some of the chiefs of the Quraish, and how *he frowned* at this interference, this chapter, to which this incident gives its title, really states that those poor and humble followers who had accepted the truth would be raised to eminence, and therefore the Prophet should not be anxious if eminent men did not listen to his message, for while these humble Muslims would be raised to high positions, the eminent men who rejected the message would be abased. The chapter thus speaks of the greatness to which the Quran would raise its followers, and of its conquests in the far future.

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[1] The predominating calamity applies both to the overthrow of opponents in this life and their chastisement hereafter.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 He frowned and turned (his) back, 2 Because there
came to him the blind man.[1] 3 And what would make
thee know that he would purify himself, 4 Or be reminded
so that the reminder should profit him? 5 As for him
who considers himself free from need, 6 To him dost thou
address thyself. 7 And no blame is on thee if he would
not purify himself. 8 And as to him who comes to thee
striving hard, 9 And he fears, 10 From him wilt thou
divert thyself? 11 Nay! surely it is (a source of) emi-
nence. 12 So let him who pleases mind it. 13 In honoured
books, 14 Exalted, purified, 15 In the hands of scribes,
16 Noble, virtuous.[2] 17 Cursed be man! how ungrateful
is he! 18 Of what thing did He create him? 19 Of a
small life-germ; He created him, then He made him
according to a measure, 20 And the way—He has made it
easy (for him), 21 Then He causes him to die, then assigns
to him a grave, 22 Then, when He pleases, He will raise
him to life again. 23 Nay! but he has not done what
He bade him. 24 So let man look to his food, 25 That
We pour down the water, pouring (it) down in abundance,
26 Then We cleave the earth, cleaving (it) asunder,
27 Then We cause to grow therein the grain, 28 And grapes
and clover, 29 And the olive and the palm, 30 And thick
gardens, 31 And fruits and herbage, 32 A provision for
you and for your cattle. 33 But when the deafening cry
comes, 34 The day on which a man shall fly from his
brother, 35 And his mother and his father, 36 And his
spouse and his sons—37 Every man of them shall on that
day have an affair which will occupy him. 38 (Many)
faces on that day shall be bright, 39 Laughing, joyous.

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[1] The blind man was Ibn-i-Umm-i-Maktum (Abdulla son of Shuraih), who came to the Holy Prophet while he was explaining the doctrines of Islam to an assembly made up of the leaders of the Quraish, hoping that the conversion of eminent men would end the troubles of Islam. The *blind man* interrupting, asked to be taught what God had revealed. The Holy Prophet took this untimely interruption ill—*he frowned and turned his back*—on which he received this revelation.

[2] The six verses from 11 to 16 are really a comfort to the Holy Prophet for the hint contained in the first ten, that the leaders would not mind his warning or accept his message, and that therefore he must apply himself to the poor, who would be raised to eminence by the Quran.

40 And on (many) faces on that day shall be dust, 41 Dark-
ness shall cover them. 42 These are they who are
unbelievers, the wicked.

CHAPTER 81

AT-TAKWÍR: THE FOLDING UP

(*Mecca—29 verses*)

THIS chapter, whose title is taken from the statement made in the first verse relating to the *folding up* of the sun, also speaks prophetically of the greatness to which Islam would rise, and of the utter failure of all opposition to it. It speaks of many things which took place in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, but at the same time it contains many references to the distant future, and refers to things which are clearly being witnessed in our own time. The consequence of all that is stated is that the final triumph of Islam in Arabia, and through Arabia over the whole world, is the greatest of all certainties. Like the last chapter, it is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the sun is covered, 2 And when the stars
darken, 3 And when the mountains are made to pass
away, 4 And when the camels are left, 5 And when the
wild animals are made to go forth, 6 And when the cities
are made to swell, 7 And when men are united, 8 And
when the one buried alive is asked: 9 For what sin she was
killed, 10 And when the books are spread, 11 And when
the heaven has its covering removed, 12 And when the
hell is kindled up, 13 And when the garden is brought
nigh,[1] 14 Every soul shall (then) know what it has pre-
pared. 15 But nay! I call to witness those that go back,
16 That run their course (and) hide themselves,[2] 17 And

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[1] The first two verses tell us that the old order will be changed and give place to a new one; the 3rd speaks of the removal of all obstacles; the 4th contains a prophecy relating to the latter days when camels shall be given up in favour of some other means of conveyance; the 5th, 6th and 7th relate to the advance of civilization; the 10th speaks of the spread of knowledge and so does the 11th, while the 12th and 13th tell us that hell and heaven are brought near. Some of these prophetical statements have seen a clear fulfilment in our own time, while others may be taken metaphorically, the result of all being that *it is the word of an honoured Apostle.*

[2] This is generally accepted to be a description of the stars, and their going back and hiding themselves is taken as signifying the setting of the

the night when it departs, 18 And the morning when it
brightens, 19 Truly it is the word of an honoured Apostle,
20 The possessor of strength, having an honourable place
with the Lord of the throne, 21 One (to be) obeyed, and
faithful in trust.[1] 22 And your companion is not gone
mad. 23 And of a truth he saw himself on the clear
horizon.[2] 24 Nor of the unseen is he a tenacious con-
cealer. 25 Nor is it the word of the cursed devil;[3]
26 Whither then will you go? 27 It is naught but a
reminder for the nations, 28 For him among you who
pleases to go straight. 29 And you do not please except
that God please, the Lord of the worlds.

CHAPTER 82

AL-INFITÂR: THE CLEAVING ASUNDER

(*Mecca*—19 *verses*)

THIS chapter, which receives its title from a statement made in its opening verses as to heaven being *cleft asunder*, is, as it were, a counterpart of the one preceding it; for while that chapter, after mentioning certain signs, draws the conclusion of the final triumph of Islam, this refers to that triumph in its opening verses, and as a result of that triumph speaks also of the utter helplessness in which the opponents would find themselves, and draws attention in particular to the unalterable law according to which every deed bears fruit.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the heaven becomes cleft asunder, 2 And when
the stars become dispersed, 3 And when the rivers are
made to flow forth, 4 And when the graves are laid open,
5 Every soul shall know what it has sent before and held
back. 6 O man! what has beguiled thee from thy Lord,
the Gracious one, 7 Who created thee, and made thee

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star of the opponents, which also means the ultimate triumph of truth. But the words may also signify the opponents themselves, who oppose truth like the slinking devil.

[1] The honoured Apostle, the one to be obeyed, the faithful in trust, is no other than the bearer of the Divine message, and the description given is as well true of the Prophet Muhammad as of the angel Gabriel.

[2] The Prophet's seeing himself on the clear horizon is in reference to the resplendence of his light, for which compare 53 : 7.

[3] I.e. these are not the conjectures of a soothsayer;

complete, and made thee symmetrical? 8 Into whatever form He pleased He constituted thee. 9 Nay! but you give the lie to the judgment, 10 And surely there are guardians over you, 11 Honourable recorders, 12 They know what you do.[1] 13 The righteous shall be in bliss, 14 And the wicked shall be in burning fire. 15 They shall enter it on the day of judgment. 16 And they shall by no means be absent from it. 17 And what will make thee realize what the day of judgment is? 18 Again, what will make thee realize what the day of judgment is? 19 The day on which no soul shall control anything for (another) soul; and the command on that day shall be entirely God's.

CHAPTER 83

AT-TATFÍF: THE DEFAULT

(*Mecca*—36 *verses*)

THIS chapter condemns the *defaulters*, and is entitled accordingly. On the other hand, those who fulfil their duties shall be exalted. Thus it continues the subject-matter of the preceding chapters. Why do the righteous prosper? Because they fulfil their duties and are true to their obligations. Why do the guilty suffer and perish? Because they are defaulters and are not true to their responsibilities. The last chapter showed that every deed of every human being was recorded; this one deals with the records of the wicked and the righteous respectively.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Woe to the defaulters, 2 Who, when they take the measure (of their dues) from men, take it fully, 3 But when they measure out to others or weigh out for them, they are deficient. 4 Do they not think that they shall be raised, 5 For a mighty day, 6 The day on which men shall stand before the Lord of the worlds? 7 Nay! the book

[1] That every action of man is recorded and bears fruit is one of the principal doctrines of the religion of Islam. Of course, it is not meant that angels are sitting with pens in their hands and inkstands before them, on desks, like copyists, noting down that at such and such a time such a one did such a good or such a bad deed. That would be a distortion of the meaning of the words of the Quran. The terminology of *writing down*, *books*, and *recorders* is only meant to show that every deed is preserved so that it has a certain effect, for the best method known to man of preserving what has happened is *writing*.

of the wicked is in the prison. 8 And what will make thee know what the prison is? 9 It is a written book.[1] 10 Woe on that day to the rejecters, 11 Who give the lie to the day of judgment. 12 And none gives the lie to it but every exceeder of limits, sinful one; 13 When Our communications are recited to him, he says: Stories of those of yore. 14 Nay! rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts. 15 Nay! they shall on that day be debarred from their Lord. 16 Then they shall enter the burning fire. 17 Then shall it be said: This is what you gave the lie to. 18 Nay! the book of the righteous is in the highest places.[2] 19 And what will make thee know what the highest places are? 20 It is a written book, 21 Those who are drawn near (to God) shall witness it. 22 The righteous shall certainly be in bliss, 23 On raised couches, they shall gaze; 24 Thou wilt recognize in their faces the brightness of bliss. 25 They are made to quaff of a pure drink that is sealed (to others). 26 The sealing of it is (with) musk; and for that let the aspirers aspire. 27 And the admixture of it is a water coming down from above,[3] 28 A fountain from which drink they who are drawn near (to God). 29 They who are guilty used to laugh at those who believe. 30 And when they passed by them, they winked at one another. 31 And when they returned to their own followers they returned exulting. 32 And when they saw them, they said: These are truly in error; 33 And they were not

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[1] *Sijjīn* is the equivalent of *sijn*, meaning a *prison*. The record or book of the deeds of the wicked is here said to be in a prison and then that prison is explained to be itself a written book in v. 9, and a similar statement follows in the case of the righteous in vv. 18–20, with this difference, that the book of the righteous is said to be in the highest places. The book of deeds and the place where it is are thus identical. In other words, the book of deeds is within the man, because the deeds are preserved by the effect that they leave on man; see note on 13:11. And it is said to be in a prison because the evil deeds hamper a man's progress and keep his faculties for good and great deeds shut up, as it were, within a prison.

[2] *'Illiyyūn* is from *'alā*, meaning *it was high*, and means *the highest of places and the most exalted of grades and the one* (bringing a man) *nearest to God in the latter abode*. The *highest places* are thus the records of the best deeds, which enable a man to soar high and cut off the chains which bind him to low desires.

[3] The water coming from above signifies spiritually the *knowledge of God*, because it is from this source that those who are drawn nigh to God (v. 28) are made to drink.

sent to be keepers over them. 34 So to-day those who
believe shall laugh at the unbelievers[1]; 35 On raised
couches, they will look. 36 The disbelievers are indeed
rewarded as they did.

CHAPTER 84

AL-INSHIQAQ: THE BURSTING ASUNDER

(*Mecca—25 verses*)

THIS chapter receives its title from the statement made in the opening verse as to the *bursting asunder* of the cloud. Just as the bursting asunder of the cloud gives life to the dead earth, so does revelation from God give life to dead hearts.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the heaven bursts asunder, 2 And listens to its
Lord and is made fit.[2] 3 And when the earth is stretched,
4 And casts forth what is in it and becomes empty, 5 And
listens to its Lord and is made fit. 6 O man! thou must
strive (to attain) to thy Lord a hard striving until thou
meet Him. 7 Then as to him who is given his book in his
right hand, 8 He shall be reckoned with by an easy
reckoning, 9 And he shall go back to his people joyfully.
10 And as to him who is given his book behind his back,
11 He shall call for perdition, 12 And enter into burning
fire. 13 For he was (erstwhile) joyful among his followers.
14 He thought that he would never return. 15 Yea!
surely his Lord does ever see him. 16 But nay! I call
to witness the sunset redness, 17 And the night and that

[1] The laughing of the believers is not to be taken literally. The word *dahik*, which literally means *laughing*, also occurs elsewhere regarding the faces of the righteous (80:39), and signifies only *the brightness of hope in their faces*. The laughing in this case simply expresses a condition of joy which should make one laugh, the indication simply being that their position regarding supremacy would be such as was that of their enemies, who in that condition laughed at the believers.

[2] The first five verses of this chapter speak of an ordinary phenomenon of nature, viz. the coming down of rain and the growth of vegetation, as a reference to the transformation which was to be brought about by the Divine revelation. By the heaven listening to its Lord here, and the earth listening to its Lord in v. 5, is meant their obedience to His commandments. To both phrases it is added that they are made suitable or fit for listening to and obeying the Divine commandments, i.e. it is their very nature to be entirely submissive to the Divine commandments.

which it drives on, 18 And the moon when it grows full,[1]
19 That you shall certainly enter one state after another.[2]
20 But what is the matter with them that they do not
believe, 21 And when the Quran is recited to them, they
do not make obeisance? 22 Nay! those who disbelieve
give the lie to the truth. 23 And God knows best what
they hide. 24 So announce to them a painful chastisement,
25 Except those who believe and do good; for them is
a reward that shall never be cut off.

CHAPTER 85

AL-BURŪJ : THE STARS

(*Mecca—22 verses*)

THIS chapter takes its title from the mention in the first verse of the heaven full of *stars*, as referring to the prosperity of the Arab nation. It continues the subject-matter of the last chapter, and points out the different states of the powerful opponents of the Holy Prophet.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the heaven full of stars, 2 And the threatened
day, 3 And the bearer of witness and those against whom
the witness is borne.[3] 4 Cursed be the companions of the
trench,[4] 5 Of the fire (kept burning) with fuel, 6 When

[1] Verses 16–18 draw attention to another phenomenon of nature, thereby indicating the departure of the power of the Arabs. The *shafaq*, or the *sunset redness*, stands here for the disappearing sun of the power of the Arabs, the night of adversity which was now to overtake them, driving before it what vestige of light had remained. But they were not to remain submerged in darkness for ever, for the moon (the Holy Prophet) had already made its appearance and would soon grow full, when the Arab nation was to march forth to conquer the world.

[2] These different states have been pointed out in vv. 16–18, and more clearly still in the first three verses of the next chapter.

[3] The three opening verses draw a comparison between the first condition of the opponents of the Holy Prophet and their final state as predicted by the Holy Prophet. The *heaven full of stars* stands for a prosperous nation. As against this prosperous state of the nation is the *threatened day*, i.e. the day of the downfall of their power, because it was with that that they were again and again threatened. The *bearer of the witness* is the *prophet* of a nation, and *those against whom the witness is borne* are *the rejecters of the prophet*.

[4] The reference is here understood to be to the persecution of some Christians by Zu Nawas, a king of Yemen, who was of the Jewish religion, or to Nebuchadnezzar's casting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into

they sit against them, 7 And they are witnesses of what
they do with the believers. 8 And they did not take
vengeance on them for aught except that they believed
in God, the Mighty, the Praised, 9 Whose is the kingdom
of the heavens and the earth ; and God is a Witness of all
things. 10 Those who persecute the believing men and
the believing women, then do not repent, shall have the
chastisement of hell, and they shall have the chastisement
of burning. 11 Those who believe and do good shall
have gardens in which rivers flow—that is the great
achievement. 12 The might of thy Lord is indeed great.
13 He it is Who originates and reproduces, 14 And He is
the Forgiving, the Loving, 15 Lord of the throne, the
Glorious, 16 The great Doer of what He will. 17 Has not
there come to thee the story of the hosts, 18 Of Pharaoh
and Samood? 19 Nay! those who disbelieve give the
lie to the truth. 20 And God encompasses them on every
side. 21 Nay! it is a glorious Quran, 22 In a guarded
tablet.[1]

CHAPTER 86

AT-TÂRIQ: THE COMER BY NIGHT

(*Mecca*—17 *verses*)

THIS chapter states how great was the difficulty which the Prophet had before him in bringing light to his benighted countrymen, and it is for this reason that he is called the *comer by night* in the first verse, and this gives the chapter its name, i.e. one who appeared at a time of total darkness and one who stood in need of knocking at the doors which were shut against him. But he is given the comfort that a spiritual resurrection will be brought about.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the heaven and the comer by night ; 2 And
what will make thee know how great the comer by night

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the fiery furnace (Dan. 3 : 19–21). I think there may, as well, be a prophetical reference here to the great Arab army against which the Muslims were compelled to defend themselves by means of a trench, in what is called the battle of the Allies or the battle of the Ditch.

[1] The Quran being in a guarded tablet signifies that it shall be guarded against all attacks. Thus we have a promise regarding the protection of the Holy Quran from every kind of corruption in one of the earliest Meccan chapters. Razi's interpretation is: This is a glorious Quran protected against change and alteration.

is ? [1] 3 (It is) the star of piercing brightness ; 4 There is
not a soul but over it is a keeper.[2] 5 So let man consider
of what he is created : 6 He is created of water pouring
forth, 7 Coming from between the back and the ribs.
8 Surely He is able to return him (to life). 9 On the day
when hidden things shall be made manifest,[3] 10 He shall
have neither strength nor a helper. 11 Consider the cloud
pouring rain, 12 And the earth splitting (with plants);
13 Surely it is a decisive word,[4] 14 And it is no joke.
15 But they make a scheme, 16 And I (too) make a
scheme. 17 So grant the unbelievers a respite : let them
alone for a while.

CHAPTER 87

AL-A'LÂ : THE MOST HIGH

(*Mecca*—19 *verses*)

ATTENTION having been drawn to the difficulties of the Holy Prophet, we have here a promise that these difficulties will be made easy; *We will make thy way smooth to a state of ease.* The title of this chapter is taken from the injunction to the Prophet to glorify the *Most High Lord,* thus indicating the high position to which he would rise. The reference to the scriptures of Abraham and Moses in the concluding verse is to show not only that the Holy Quran agrees with previous scriptures in essential principles, but also that those scriptures contain prophecies of the Holy Prophet's advent.

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[1] *Táriq* (from *tarq,* primarily meaning *the striking of a thing*) originally signifies *a comer by night,* because one who comes by night finds the doors shut, and knocking at the doors becomes necessary. *The comer by night* is here the Holy Prophet ; the revelation of the Quran is also spoken of as taking place on a blessed night (44 : 3 and 97 : 1). It may also be added that *at-táriq* is also the name given to the *morning star,* because it comes in the end of the night. But in that sense, too, the word is applicable to *a great man* or *a chief,* as in the saying of Hind on the day of Uhud : " *We are the daughters of the morning-star* " (Ar. *Táriq*) ; where the meaning is that *we are the daughters of a chief,* likening him to the star in elevation. It is for this reason that in the next verse, he is called the star of piercing brightness, indicating that all darkness shall be dispelled before the resplendent brightness of the Holy Prophet.

[2] The reference is to the guarding of the good and evil deeds which a man does. See 82 : 10–12.

[3] The hidden things are the consequences of one's good or evil deeds, which will be made palpably manifest in the shape of gardens and fruits or chains and fire.

[4] The *decisive word* is the Holy Quran. Just as when rain comes down, the earth must produce vegetation, so the coming of the Divine revelation is bound to raise a dead nation to life, and no efforts against it would hamper its progress.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Glorify the name of thy Lord, the Most High, 2 Who
creates, then makes complete, 3 And Who makes (things)
according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal),[1]
4 And Who brings forth herbage, 5 Then makes it dried
up, dust-coloured. 6 We will make thee recite so thou
shalt not forget,[2] 7 Except as God pleases; for He knows
the manifest, and what is hidden. 8 And We will make
thy way smooth to a state of ease.[3] 9 Therefore do remind,
for reminding does profit. 10 He who fears will mind,
11 And the most unfortunate one will avoid it, 12 Who
shall enter the great fire; 13 Then therein he shall neither
live nor die.[4] 14 He indeed shall be successful who
purifies himself, 15 And magnifies the name of his Lord
and prays. 16 Nay! you prefer the life of this world,
17 While the hereafter is better and more lasting.
18 Certainly this is in the earlier scriptures,[5] 19 The
scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

CHAPTER 88

AL-GHÂSHIYAH: THE OVERWHELMING EVENT

(*Mecca*—26 *verses*)

THE *Overwhelming Event*, whose mention in the first verse supplies a name to this chapter, is the doom of the opponents in this life and their punishment hereafter, because truth could not be established in the land without their overthrow.

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[1] Everything is made according to a certain measure so that it cannot go beyond that limit, and then God has shown to every created thing the way by which it can attain the perfection which is destined for it.

[2] Here we have one of the most wonderful miracles that has ever been witnessed. The Prophet was made to recite the Holy Quran, and the sign of its being a Divine revelation was that he never forgot it. He was as apt to forget things as other mortals are, as plainly pointed out in v. 7, but he never forgot a word of the Holy Quran though he had sometimes to receive long chapters containing as many as twenty sections, and though at other times he received verses belonging to the same chapter at a distance of several years. Everything that he received was at once put in writing and committed to memory by his companions, and he could neither read nor write, nor were the manuscripts in his possession so that he would be able to consult them, and yet he never forgot a word of the Holy Quran.

[3] The words predict the Prophet's triumph and the removal of the distress in which Islam was.

[4] There is no *life* in hell, for life is only for the righteous; neither is there *death*, because death signifies a state of complete rest.

[5] I.e. prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet are to be met with in earlier scriptures.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Has not there come to thee the news of the over-
whelming event ? 2 (Some) faces on that day shall be
downcast, 3 Labouring, toiling, 4 Entering into burning
fire, 5 Made to drink from a boiling spring. 6 They shall
have no food but of thorns, 7 Which will neither fatten
nor avail against hunger. 8 (Other) faces on that day
shall be happy, 9 Well-pleased because of their striving,
10 In a lofty garden, 11 Wherein thou shalt not hear
vain talk. 12 Therein is a fountain flowing. 13 Therein
are thrones raised high, 14 And drinking cups ready
placed, 15 And cushions set in rows, 16 And carpets spread
out. 17 Do they not consider the clouds, how they are
created ? [1] 18 And the heaven, how it is reared aloft?
19 And the mountains, how they are raised high? 20 And
the earth, how it is made a vast expanse ? 21 So do
remind, for thou art only a reminder. 22 Thou art not a
watcher over them ; 23 But whoever turns back and
disbelieves, 24 God will chastise him with the greatest
chastisement. 25 Surely to Us is their turning back,
26 Then upon Us is the taking of their account.

CHAPTER 89

AL-FAJR : THE DAYBREAK

(*Mecca*—30 *verses*)

THE important *Daybreak* which gives its name to this chapter is the first morning of the month of Zulhajj, or the month of the pilgrimage, because pilgrimage gave Mecca a great importance as a trade centre and made its residents enjoy a life of ease, the trade of the whole country being brought to their very doors. A warning is given here of punishment that must overtake the city, as the cities of previous nations, Ad, Samood, etc., had been destroyed.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the daybreak, 2 And the ten nights, 3 And
the even and the odd,[2] 4 And the night when it departs.

[1] *Ibil* means, according to Abu Amr Ibnul Ala, *clouds that bear the water for rain.* As this significance suits the context better, I adopt this instead of the usual rendering, the *camels*, the mention of the clouds along with heaven, where they exist, and with mountains, which cool the vapours so that they pour down water, and the earth, which benefits by that water, being in accordance with what is said in many other places.

[2] The *daybreak* is the daybreak of the first of the month of Zulhajj ; the *ten nights* are the first ten nights, the tenth day being the day of

5 Truly in that there is an oath for those who possess
understanding. 6 Hast thou not considered how thy
Lord dealt with Ad, 7 (The people of) Aram,[1] possessors of
lofty buildings, 8 The like of which were not created in the
(other) cities? 9 And (with) Samood, who hewed out
the rocks in the valley? 10 And (with) Pharaoh, the lord
of hosts, 11 Who committed inordinacy in the cities,
12 So they made great mischief therein? 13 Therefore
thy Lord let down upon them a portion of the chastisement.
14 Surely thy Lord is watching. 15 And as for man, when
his Lord tries him, then treats him with honour and makes
him lead an easy life, he says: My Lord honours me.
16 But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to
him his means of subsistence, he says: My Lord has
disgraced me.[2] 17 Nay! but you do not honour the
orphan, 18 Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor.[3]
19 And you eat away the heritage, devouring (it) indis-
criminately,[4] 20 And you love wealth with exceeding love.
21 Nay! when the earth is made to crumble to pieces,
22 And thy Lord shall come and the angels in ranks,
23 And hell is made to appear on that day. On that day
shall man be mindful, and what shall being mindful (then)
avail him? 24 He shall say: O! would that I had sent
before for (this) my life! 25 But on that day shall no
one chastise with (anything like) His chastisement. 26 And
no one shall bind with (anything like) His binding. 27 O

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sacrifices; the *even* may stand for the two days following the tenth of Zulhajj, during which certain rites of the pilgrimage are performed, the odd signifying the thirteenth day, which was the day of departure. The pilgrimage had made Mecca the metropolis of Arabia as well as the centre of its trade, and its prosperity therefore depended on the pilgrimage, and it is of this that the Meccans are reminded. Some understand that the *odd* refers to the Creator who is One and the *even* to creation which has all been created in pairs.

[1] Aram was, according to one account, the name of the grandfather of Ad, from whom the tribe took its name, and according to another, the name of a city in which it lived.

[2] There is neither honour in abundance of wealth, nor disgrace in the straitening of the means of subsistence.

[3] Verses 17 and 18 (as also the 19th) show how the Prophet felt for the orphans, the poor, and the weak, so much so that he warns his powerful and wealthy opponents that their indifference to the orphans and the poor and their injustice to the weak shall bring down upon them the Divine judgment, which shall shatter their power.

[4] Among the Arabs women and young children were not allowed to have any share in the inheritance, because they could not fight the enemy.

soul that art at rest! 28 Return to thy Lord, well-pleased
(with Him), well-pleasing (Him), 29 So enter among My
servants, 30 And enter into My garden.[1]

CHAPTER 90

AL-BALAD: THE CITY

(*Mecca*—20 *verses*)

THE *city* spoken of in the first verse, from which this chapter receives its name, is Mecca—the city which had been warned in the last chapter, of punishment overtaking it as it had overtaken former nations. But it was to be the Prophet's city, and there is a clear prophecy in the second verse that a time would come when not only would the Muslims be not persecuted in that city, but they would enter it as conquerors. But, the chapter tells us, man cannot attain an object unless he keeps on a hard struggle, and so the Muslims must face difficulties.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Nay! I call to witness this city—2 And thou shalt
be made free from obligation in this city[2]—3 And the
begetter and whom he begot.[3] 4 Certainly We have created
man to face difficulty.[4] 5 Does he think that no one has
power over him? 6 He shall say: I have wasted much
wealth.[5] 7 Does he think that no one sees him? 8 Have

[1] The concluding verses of this chapter refer to the highest stage of the spiritual development of man, the stage in which he *rests contented* with his Lord, and finds his quietude, his happiness, and his delight in Him. This is the stage of life which we term the heavenly life. The pure and perfect sincerity, truth, and righteousness of a person are rewarded by Almighty God by granting him a heaven upon this earth. All others look to a prospective paradise, but he enters paradise in this very life.

[2] *This city* is Mecca, and the statement made here is prophetical, indicating that the Prophet would be made free from obligation in respect to the sacredness of the territory of Mecca, being allowed to enter it by force, as he did at the conquest of Mecca, to which, in fact, the words refer. There is also a saying of the Holy Prophet in support of this.

[3] The great *begetter* is none other than Abraham, the progenitor of the Arabs, and by *whom he begot* is meant either Ishmael, who assisted Abraham in raising the foundations of the Sacred House at Mecca, or the Holy Prophet himself, who was the object of Abraham's prayer. Both Abraham and Ishmael were witnesses to the truth of the Holy Prophet.

[4] I.e. man's existence is necessarily one of *struggle with difficulties in* this life, and no great object is attained without courageously facing difficulties.

[5] The reference is apparently to the ultimate state of the opponents when, after spending all their wealth in opposition to the Holy Prophet, they would find that the Prophet's cause was triumphant, and would then say that they really wasted their wealth in opposition to him. Compare 8:36.

We not given him two eyes, 9 And a tongue and two lips,
10 And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?[1]
11 But he would not attempt the uphill road; 12 And what
will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is?
13 (It is) the setting free of a slave, 14 Or the giving of
food in a day of hunger 15 To an orphan, having relation-
ship, 16 Or to the poor man lying in the dust.[2] 17 Moreover
he is of those who believe and charge one another to show
patience, and charge one another to show compassion.
18 These are the people of the right hand. 19 And those
who disbelieve in Our communications—they are the
people of the left hand. 20 On them is fire closed over.

CHAPTER 91

ASH-SHAMS: THE SUN

(*Mecca*—15 *verses*)

THE Prophet is the *Sun* of righteousness (the word giving its title to this chapter), with whose rising the way to perfection is pointed out to man, but only those who purify themselves are really successful, while those who give themselves over to corruption fail to attain the object.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the sun and his light, 2 And the moon when
she borrows light from him, 3 And the day when it exposes
it to view, 4 And the night when it draws a veil over it,
5 And the heaven and its make, 6 And the earth and its
extension, 7 And the soul and its perfection;[3] 8 And He

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[1] The two conspicuous ways are *the way of good and the way of evil.*

[2] The doing of good to the oppressed, the poor, and the orphans is called an uphill road, because of the difficulty of doing it. The constant reference to the helping of the poor and the orphans and the setting free of slaves brings to light the real character of the Holy Prophet, and the great message of Islam.

[3] The first six verses point to six characteristics in pairs opposed to each other to be found in nature, while the seventh tells us that all these varying characteristics are to be met with in the Perfect Man, referring specially to the Sun of righteousness, Muhammad, on whom be peace. The sun gives light and the moon borrows it from him; the perfect man also borrows light from a higher source and gives light to others. The day exposes things to view and gives man an opportunity for struggle, and the night draws a veil and brings rest; the perfect man possesses both qualifications as he struggles hard while his mind enjoys complete contentment. The heaven is raised high and the earth is expanded for every one to trample on; the perfect man possesses both qualifications, being high in his aspirations and lowly in his bearing towards others.

intimated to it by inspiration its deviating from truth and
its guarding (against evil); [1] 9 He will indeed be suc-
cessful who purifies it, 10 And he will fail who corrupts it.
11 Samood gave the lie (to the truth) in their inordinacy,
12 When the most unfortunate of them broke forth with
mischief, 13 And God's apostle said to them: (Leave
alone) God's she-camel, and (give) her (to) drink. 14 But
they called him a liar and slaughtered her; so their Lord
crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the
ground.) 15 And He fears not its consequence.

CHAPTER 92

AL-LAIL: THE NIGHT

(Mecca—21 verses)

THE object of this chapter is to show that the *Night* of unbelief and ignorance (hence the title of it) will give place to the light of the day, for inasmuch as men strive after different objects, those who strive to establish good shall have facility, while those who go after evil shall find themselves in difficulties.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the night when it draws a veil, 2 And the
day when it shines in brightness, 3 And the creating of
the male and the female, 4 Your striving is surely (directed
to) various (ends). 5 Then as for him who gives away and
guards (against evil), 6 And accepts the best, 7 We will
facilitate for him the easy end. 8 And as for him who is
niggardly and considers himself free from need (of God),
9 And rejects the best, 10 We will facilitate for him the
difficult end. 11 And his wealth will not avail him when
he perishes. 12 Ours is it to show the way, 13 And Ours
is the hereafter and the former. 14 So I warn you of the
fire that flames. 15 None shall enter it but the most
unhappy, 16 Who gives the lie (to the truth) and turns
(his) back. 17 And away from it shall be kept the one
who guards most (against evil), 18 Who gives away his
wealth, purifying himself. 19 And no one has with him

[1] I.e. the two ways of good and evil have been made manifest to him by Divine revelation.

any boon for which he should be rewarded, 20 Except the
seeking of the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High, 21 And
he shall soon be well-pleased.

CHAPTER 93

AD-DUHÂ: THE EARLY HOURS

(*Mecca*—11 *verses*)

THIS chapter draws attention to the gradual spreading of the light of the sun of Islam, and is therefore given the title of *The Early Hours* of the day. The last two chapters metaphorically speak of the advent of the Holy Prophet as the rising of the sun, and the metaphor is continued here. As the sunshine is not fully resplendent immediately after the rising of the sun, so the truth would only shine in its full brightness gradually.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the early hours of the day, 2 And the night
when it covers with darkness. 3 Thy Lord has not for-
saken thee, nor has He become displeased.[1] 4 And what
comes after is certainly better for thee than that which
has gone before.[2] 5 And soon will thy Lord give thee so
that thou shalt be well pleased. 6 Did He not find thee an
orphan and give thee shelter? [3] 7 And find thee unable
to see and show the way? [4] 8 And find thee in want and

[1] Revelation was sent down to the Prophet in portions, and therefore necessarily at intervals, and therefore these verses may be taken as a solace to the Holy Prophet in case there was a long interval. But the context shows that the statement is really prophetical, showing that God will never forsake the Prophet, by which, of course, is meant his religion, and under the present circumstances it is as great a solace for the Muslims as it was for the Holy Prophet. V. 4 makes this significance clear.

[2] Such is truth that, although it may gain ground only inch by inch, after severe struggle with the forces of falsehood, yet it does continue to advance. Every succeeding moment was to be better for the Holy Prophet than the last, and this not only proved to be true in his lifetime, but remains true to this day, and will remain true for ever.

[3] The Prophet's father died about three months before he was born.

[4] That *erring* is not the significance of *dáll* here is shown conclusively by 53 : 2, which says: "Your companion *did not err*." Now, one who is spoken of as *never having erred* in one place could not be described as *erring* in another, while both revelations belong to about the same period. The context also makes this meaning clear. Vv. 6, 7, 8 stand in close relation respectively to vv. 9, 10, and 11; v. 6 tells the Prophet that he was himself an orphan, and the conclusion that he should not therefore oppress the orphan is drawn in v 9; similarly, v 8 speaks of the Divine

make thee to be free from want ? 9 So, as for the orphan, do not oppress (him). 10 And as for him who asks, do not chide (him). 11 And as for the favour of thy Lord, do announce (it).

CHAPTER 94

AL-INSHIRÂH : THE EXPANSION

(Mecca—8 verses)

THIS chapter, like its predecessors, also comforts the Prophet. His difficulties were not to continue, but would soon be followed by ease, and it was a sufficient indication of this that his breast was *opened* or *expanded* for the truth (whence the title of this chapter), and the great burden which almost broke his back, his deep anxiety for humanity, had been removed by the grant of Divine revelation to him. In fact, this chapter is closely connected with the preceding one, as both show that the Holy Prophet had suffered great anxiety on account of a fallen humanity, and it was Divine revelation that ultimately took him by the hand, thus guiding his steps and relieving him of his great anxiety.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Have We not expanded for thee thy breast,[1] 2 And taken off from thee thy burden, 3 Which pressed heavily

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favour on him in making him free of want, and the conclusion is drawn in v. 11 that he should therefore announce the Divine favour on him. Now, v. 10 plainly speaks of *one who asks* to be guided to the truth, or a petitioner generally who needs the help of another, being unable himself to do a thing or undertake a task. The Holy Prophet was no doubt a *sâil* in this sense. He did not worship idols, but neither could he, without the help of God, find out the way for the regeneration of his people, for which his soul yearned so eagerly. Hence *he was unable to see the way by himself*, and the word *dâll* signifies one who is *perplexed and unable to see the way* for himself. The true significance of the word is thus that God found the Prophet in quest of the way, but unable to chalk out a way for himself, and therefore He *guided* him by Divine light.

[1] There is a report according to which Gabriel opened the breast of the Holy Prophet while he was yet a boy in the charge of his nurse, and washed his heart. Its authenticity has been questioned on critical grounds. The same incident is related to have taken place again when the Holy Prophet was entrusted with his Divine mission. The incident was therefore evidently a *kashf*, or *a clear vision*, which signifies exactly what *the expanding of the breast* signifies elsewhere, see 6 : 126, and 20 : 25. The expansion of the breast signifies in fact, as a commentator puts it, " its illumination with wisdom and its vastness for the reception of what was to be revealed to him."

upon thy back,[1] 4 And exalted for thee thy mention ? [2]
5 Surely with difficulty is ease ; 6 With difficulty is
surely ease.[3] 7 So when thou art free, strive hard,[4]
8 And make thy Lord thy exclusive object.

CHAPTER 95

AT-TÍN : THE FIG

(*Mecca*—8 *verses*)

THIS chapter shows—by drawing a comparison between the Mosaic dispensation (of which the *Fig* is a symbol, thus giving its name to this chapter), which was to wither away like the fig in the Gospel, and the Islamic dispensation, which is represented by the olive, which being neither Eastern nor Western, its oil would light the world for ever—that man is so created that he can rise to the highest degree of eminence if he sets before himself the right principles and acts on them, and that he degrades himself to the lowest position in creation if he is not guided by right principles, or, being so guided, fails to act upon them.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the fig and the olive, 2 And mount Sinai,
3 And this city made secure,[5] 4 Certainly We created man

[1] The burden which pressed heavily upon his back signifies anxiety for raising his people from the ignorance and superstitions in which they were involved. Compare 26 : 3.

[2] This is a clear prophecy of the glorious eminence to which the Holy Prophet was to be raised, being uttered at a time when he was alone and unknown.

[3] In consonance with what is said in v. 4, the *ease* refers to the *ultimate triumph* of the Holy Prophet, and the *difficulty* to the *trials* which he was then undergoing. The statement is repeated showing that Islam would twice be under great difficulties and trials, and that on both occasions it would come out with ultimate triumph.

[4] The Prophet's being *free* signifies *his freedom from anxiety*, in reference to what is said in the previous verses, because all those verses show that the Prophet's anxiety was completely removed. Hence, being now free from all anxiety he was to strive hard for the regeneration of his people and make his Lord his exclusive object.

[5] The *fig* and the *olive* stand respectively for *the law given on mount Sinai* and *that revealed in the sacred city of Mecca* ; and the two verses that follow make it clear. It must be remembered that a comparison between Moses and the Holy Prophet Muhammad is introduced in very early revelations, as here and in 52 : 1–6 and 73 : 15. That the fig stands for the Jewish dispensation is a fact admitted by all commentators of the Bible, and this is the significance underlying that otherwise inexplicable

in the best make. 5 Then We render him the lowest of
the low, 6 Except those who believe and do good, for they
shall have a reward never to be cut off.[1] 7 So who can
give thee the lie after (this) about the judgment? 8 Is not
God the best of the judges?

CHAPTER 96

AL-'ALAQ: THE CLOT

(Mecca—19 verses)

THE first five verses of this chapter are by universal admission the first revelation which the Holy Prophet received. In the arrangement of chapters, however, it is given its present place because the chapters preceding it lay the greatest stress upon the perfection and eminence to which the Holy Prophet was to rise, as well as the perfection and eminence to which he was to raise those who followed him—a goal which could not be attained by human effort; and hence the opening words of this chapter tell him to seek the assistance of the Divine Being. The chapter is called *The Clot* because of the statement made in the second verse that God created man from a clot of blood, which contains a hint that, as a beautiful human form is evolved out of such a humble origin, even so the Holy Prophet would be made to rise to the greatest eminence from the humble circumstances in which he was placed.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Read in the name of thy Lord who created, 2 He
created man from a clot. 3 Read and thy Lord is Most
Honourable, 4 Who taught (to write) with the pen,[2]

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circumstance relating to Jesus cursing the fig-tree and its withering away; see Matt. 21 : 19. As for the olive being a symbol of Islam, see 24 : 35.

The comparison shows that whereas the law given on mount Sinai passed away like the fig-tree in Jesus' parable, the new light, lit from the blessed olive-tree, was never to be extinguished, because it belonged neither to the East nor to the West, but was meant for all men in all ages, while Moses' law was limited by considerations both of time and place.

[1] Man has been created in the best of moulds, i.e. with enormous capability for progress, but he so abases himself as to make himself the lowest of the low, as the idol-worshippers by bowing low before such inanimate objects as stones. Only by a wild stretch of imagination could the words be applied to the so-called fall of Adam and its supposed consequences.

[2] The mention of the *pen* in this, the very first, revelation of the Holy Prophet is significant, and it not only indicates "the powerful help for propagating the knowledge of the Divine Unity" which the Holy Prophet was to find in the *pen* (Rodwell), but signifies as well that the pen was to prove a most powerful instrument in the uplift of humanity. "Read

5 Taught man what he knew not. 6 Nay! man is
inordinate, 7 Because he sees himself free from want.
8 Surely to thy Lord is the return. 9 Hast thou seen
him who forbids, 10 A servant when he prays? 11 Hast
thou considered if he is on the right way, 12 Or enjoins
righteousness? 13 Hast thou considered if he gives the
lie to the truth and turns (his) back? 14 Does he not
know that God does see? 15 Nay! if he desist not, We
would certainly smite his forehead, 16 A lying, sinful
forehead. 17 Then let him summon his council, 18 We
too would summon the braves of the army.[1] 19 Nay! obey
him not, and make obeisance and draw nigh (to God).

CHAPTER 97

AL-QADR: THE MAJESTY

(*Mecca—5 verses*)

THE last chapter contained the first revelation of the Holy Quran, and it is suitably followed in arrangement by one that relates when the revelation of the Quran began. It was the night of Majesty (one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadán) which first witnessed the shining of that light which was destined to illumine the whole world, and its very name points to the majesty and grandeur of the message which was delivered in it.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 We revealed it on the grand night.[2] 2 And what
will make thee comprehend what the grand night is?
3 The grand night is better than a thousand months.
4 The angels and the spirit descend in it by the permission
of their Lord for every affair, 5 Peace! it is till the break
of the morning.[3]

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and write" is thus the very first message of Islam, and it was for this reason that the rise of Islam gave an impetus to learning which is not met with in the history of any other religion.

[1] There is no doubt a prophetical reference here to the later struggles.

[2] *Lailat-ul-qadr*, which I have rendered as the *grand night*, and which literally means *the night of majesty* or *grandeur* or *greatness*, is a well-known night in the month of Ramadán, being the 25th or 27th or 29th night of the month. In 44 : 3 it is called *the blessed night*. It was on one such night that the revelation of the Holy Quran began.

[3] "Peace" is the chief distinction of *lailat-ul-qadr*. This peace comes to the hearts of the faithful in the form of a tranquillity of mind which makes them fit to receive Divine blessings.

CHAPTER 98

AL-BAYYINAH: THE CLEAR EVIDENCE

(*Mecca—8 verses*)

THE Holy Prophet, who received the mightiest of the revelations, is here called the *Clear Evidence* (the words supplying the name of this chapter), because it was through his message that idolatry, superstition and a thousand other evils were swept off from Arabia, all attempts to regenerate Arabia before him having proved a failure.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Those who disbelieved from among the followers of
the Book and the polytheists could not have obtained
freedom (from sin) until there had come to them the clear
evidence: 2 An apostle from God, reciting pure pages,[1]
3 Wherein are (all the) right books.[2] 4 And those who were
given the Book did not become divided except after clear
evidence had come to them, 5 And they are not enjoined
anything except that they should serve God, being sincere
to Him in obedience, upright, and keep up prayer and pay
the poor-rate, and that is the right religion. 6 Those who
disbelieve from among the followers of the Book and the
polytheists shall be in the fire of hell, abiding therein;
they are the worst of men. 7 Those who believe and do
good—they are the best of men. 8 Their reward with
their Lord is gardens of perpetuity in which rivers flow,
abiding therein for ever; God is well pleased with them
and they are well pleased with Him; that is for him
who fears his Lord.

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[1] The Arabs were a people about whom all hopes of reformation had been given up. The Jews and the Christians had tried their best to reform Arabia, but both movements had failed to such an extent that they themselves had been submerged in the evils of Arabia. The indigenous movement of the Hanifs had sprung up and failed without bringing about any change in the condition of Arabia. And last of all had come an Apostle reciting pure pages of Divine revelation who swept off every superstition and every evil from the face of Arabia: this was indeed a clear evidence of his being from God.

[2] In the Holy Quran all those right directions are to be met with which were revealed in any other book, as well as those which may not have been previously revealed, but which are necessary for the guidance of man. The Quran thus claims to contain all the good points of other sacred books, and, in addition, to supply their deficiencies.

CHAPTER 99

AZ-ZILZÂL : THE SHAKING

(*Mecca*—8 *verses*)

THE *shaking* spoken of in the first verse of this chapter, from which it receives its title, is a prophecy of the great disasters which shook Arabia at the advent of the Holy Prophet, and of the unprecedented disasters which are shaking the whole world now. A transformation was to be brought about by the Apostle of God as pointed out in the last chapter, but the awakening could not be brought about unless the people were shaken from the lethargy into which they had fallen. How that shaking was to be brought about is shown here.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When the earth is shaken with her (violent) shaking,
2 And the earth brings forth her burdens, 3 And man
says: What has befallen her? 4 On that day she shall
tell her news, 5 As if thy Lord had revealed to her.[1] 6 On
that day men shall come forth in sundry bodies that they
may be shown their works. 7 So he who has done an
atom's weight of good shall see it. 8 And he who has
done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.[2]

CHAPTER 100

AL-'ÂDIYÂT : THE ASSAULTERS

(*Mecca*—11 *verses*)

THIS chapter receives its title from the prophetic mention of the *Assaulters* in the first verse, showing that the great disasters spoken of in the last chapter were to be brought about by means of wars. This proved true not only in the time of our Holy Prophet, but its truth shines still more clearly in our own day, and the unpre-

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[1] Considered in connection with this life, the prophecies refer to the time when, after being severely shaken, as Arabia was, the earth was to bring forth its dead, who would then be raised spiritually to life. The telling of her news by the earth signifies the appearance of circumstances which would make manifest what evil and injustice had been wrought on her, as is shown by the confession of the Meccans that they had been evil-doers. Some consider the verses to describe the signs of the latter days, or of the approach of the judgment day, the words indicating in that case that great earthquakes and other disasters would shake the whole of the earth.

[2] Such is the clear law of good and evil. Not an atom's weight of good or evil, whoever may be the doer of it, is left without its reward. In other words, every action has a consequence.

cedented wars of our time are no doubt a precursor of a great spiritual awakening, even as they proved in Arabia thirteen centuries ago.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the assaulters breathing pantingly, 2 And
those that produce fire striking, 3 And those that press
forward at morn, 4 And thereby raise dust, 5 Then rush
thereby upon an assembly: 6 Surely man is ungrateful
to his Lord.[1] 7 And he is a witness of that. 8 And
surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth. 9 Does he
not know when what is in the graves is raised, 10 And
what is in the hearts is made apparent? 11 Their Lord
this day is fully aware of them.[2]

CHAPTER 101

AL-QĀRI'AH: THE REPELLING CALAMITY

(*Mecca*—11 *verses*)

THE *repelling calamity* of this chapter, which gives it its title, is the same as the *shaking* of the last chapter but one.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The great calamity! 2 How terrible the great
calamity! 3 And what will make thee comprehend how
terrible the great calamity is?[3] 4 The day on which men
shall be as scattered moths, 5 And the mountains shall be
as loosened wool.[4] 6 Then as for him whose measure of

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[1] According to most commentators, the description in the first five verses is applicable either to camels or to horses, and refers to the horses employed in wars, the reference being of course prophetical. The reference may as well be to the warriors themselves. The producing of fire in this case stands for the waging of war, and *almughīrāt* signifies *the raiders*; the five verses thus giving a description of the waging of war by the Meccans against the Muslims. The sixth verse calls attention to the ungratefulness of the Meccans in rejecting the Holy Prophet.

[2] I.e. of what they do.

[3] *Al-Qāri'ah* (from *qar'*, meaning *striking with severity*) signifies a *very great calamity*, and the word occurs without the definite article *al* in 13 : 31, where it is used to denote one of those great calamities which befell the Quraish from time to time. In 69 : 4, *al-qāri'ah* signifies the doom of a people. The word as used here signifies the *promised* or *threatened* calamity; and thus it includes both the threatened calamity of this life and that of the hereafter

[4] The opponents of the Holy Prophet became like scattered moths, even in this life, and their great leaders, who were compared to mountains, were destroyed. As applying to the Resurrection the words need no explanation.

good deeds is heavy, 7 He shall live a pleasant life. 8 And
as for him whose measure of good deeds is light, 9 His abode
shall be the abyss.[1] 10 And what will make thee know
what it is? 11 A burning fire.

CHAPTER 102

AT-TAKĀSUR: RICHES

(*Mecca—8 verses*)

THIS chapter, which is entitled *Riches*, from the occurrence of that word in the first verse, states that the desire for the abundance of worldly goods and of the comforts of this life is the great impediment which keeps men away from the real object of life.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 The desire of increasing riches diverts you, 2 Until
you come to the graves.[2] 3 Nay! you shall know,
4 Nay! nay! you shall know. 5 Nay! if you had known
with a certain knowledge, 6 You should certainly have
seen the hell;[3] 7 Then you shall see it with the eye of
certainty; 8 Then on that day you shall be questioned
about the boons.

CHAPTER 103

AL-'ASR: TIME

(*Mecca—3 verses*)

THIS chapter draws attention to the testimony of *Time* in showing that those alone shall prosper who accept the truth, the rejecters being utterly lost, and hence its title.

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[1] The original word for abode is *umm*, which means *a mother*. *A place of habitation* or *abode* is also called *umm*, because it grants protection to a man as does the mother to a babe. The abyss or hell is here called a mother to indicate that man's connection with hell is similar to that of a baby with its mother, viz. that his abode there fits him for progress in the spiritual world. Thus according to the Holy Quran, hell is only a stage in the spiritual progress of those who have wasted their opportunity in this life or contracted diseases which require a strong cure.

[2] *Coming to the graves* stands for *death*. The object of diversion is omitted here, and the context shows that diversion from the object of life is meant.

[3] Hell can be seen even in this life according to this verse which shows clearly that hell, like heaven, begins with this life; only a man must have the eye to see it. Hell is therefore another name for the consequences of evil deeds. The last verse of the chapter shows that man goes to hell for spoiling his opportunity here.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Consider the time, 2 Surely man is in loss, 3 Except those who believe and do good,[1] and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.[2]

CHAPTER 104

AL-HUMAZAH : THE SLANDERER

(*Mecca—9 verses*)

As opposed to those who are spoken of in the last chapter as believing, doing good, and enjoining truth and patience, we have here a description of those who, instead of doing any permanent good, amass wealth, and instead of enjoining truth, slander others. There is also a prophecy here that woe shall be the end of the Holy Prophet's slanderers.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Woe to every slanderer, defamer, 2 Who amasses
wealth and considers it a provision (against mishap) ;[3]
3 He thinks that his wealth will make him abide. 4 Nay !
he shall certainly be hurled into the crushing disaster,[4]
5 And what will make thee realize what the crushing
disaster is ? 6 It is the fire kindled by God, 7 Which
rises above the hearts.[5] 8 It shall be closed over upon them,
9 In extended columns.

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[1] Every moment that passes away is a moment lost unless it is utilized in doing good. The statement also draws attention to past history of the righteous and prophetically to the time of the Holy Prophet.

[2] The enjoining of patience upon each other follows the direction to enjoin truth, because the preaching of truth brings man face to face with difficulties, and unless he is patient and forbearing under hardships, he cannot adhere to the *truth*.

[3] The slanderers and defamers are condemned here generally, with particular reference to the Meccans, who started their persecution of the Holy Prophet by bitterly slandering and defaming him, so that the pilgrims coming to Mecca from afar should not listen to his teaching.

[4] *Al-hutamah* is derived from *hatima*, meaning *it became broken in pieces*. The name is applied to *hell*, because it crushes everything that is cast into it. I translate it as *the crushing disaster*, so that it may include both hell and the other disasters which were prophesied to crush the wealthy defamers of the Holy Prophet, their punishment being called by this name because they wanted to *crush* the Holy Prophet and the truth he brought.

[5] It should be noted that the fire of hell is described as *rising above the hearts*, showing that it is within the heart of man that the origin of hell-fire lies. A man's hell is thus within his own heart in this life, and it will assume a more palpable shape in the life to come.

CHAPTER 105

AL-FĪL : THE ELEPHANT

(Mecca—5 verses)

THIS chapter speaks of the protection of the Kaba as against the powerful armies of Abraha, the Christian viceroy of Yemen, and is entitled the *Elephant* on account of the presence of elephants in the invading army, and prophetically refers to the protection of the Holy Prophet as against his powerful enemies.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Hast thou not considered how thy Lord dealt with
the possessors of the elephant ? [1] 2 Did He not cause
their war to end in confusion, 3 And send down (to prey)
upon them birds in flocks, 4 Hurling on them hard stones ;
5 So He rendered them like straw eaten up ? [2]

CHAPTER 106

THE QURAISH

(Mecca—4 verses)

THIS chapter is closely connected with the last, and in fact continues the subject-matter, reminding the Quraish (after whom it is named) of the great benefits conferred on them because of their guardianship of the Kaba.

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[1] The reference is to the memorable invasion of Mecca by Abraha, the Christian viceroy, of the king of Abyssinia, at Yemen. Abraha's object was to destroy the Kaba so as to divert the Arab religious enthusiasm to Sanaa, where he had built a magnificent cathedral for the purpose, as well as the Arab trade. This army is known in Arabia as the *ashâb-ul-fil*, or *the possessors of the elephant*, because of the presence of one or more elephants The year in which the invasion took place is known as *the year of the elephant*, being the year 570 of the Christian era, and coinciding with the year of the Holy Prophet's birth. Unable to defend the Holy Place against the huge army, and failing to dissuade Abraha, who was now encamped some three days' march from Mecca, from his sacrilegious purpose, Abdul Muttalab, thus prayed aloud, leaning upon the door of the Kaba : "Defend, O Lord ! Thine own House ; and suffer not the Cross to triumph over the Kaba !" and then the whole population of Mecca repaired to the hills around the holy city. Meanwhile a virulent form of small-pox or some other pestilence broke out in Abraha's army, with such severity that the army retreated *in confusion* and dismay, many of them, being unable to find their way back, perishing in the valleys, while a part was swept away by floods.

[2] The historians tell us that the army was destroyed by small-pox. The mention of birds is merely intended to show that the birds feasted

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 For the protection of the Quraish—2 Their protection
during their journey in the winter and the summer[1]—
3 So let them serve the Lord of this House, 4 Who has
provided them with food against hunger and given them
security against fear.[2]

CHAPTER 107

AL-MĀ'ŪN : THE ALMS

(*Mecca—7 verses*)

NOTWITHSTANDING the favours conferred upon the Quraish, spoken of in the last two chapters, they denied judgment, and trampled upon the rights of the orphans and the poor. It is on account of their withholding the *alms* from the poor that the chapter is entitled *The Alms*. It is an error to regard it as a Medina revelation; it undoubtedly belongs to the early Meccan period.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Hast thou considered him who gives the lie to
religion ?[3] 2 That is the one who treats the orphan
with harshness, 3 And does not urge (others) to feed the
poor. 4 So woe to the praying ones, 5 Who are unmindful
of their prayers, 6 Who do (good) to be seen, 7 And withhold
alms.

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on their corpses, tearing off flesh from the dead bodies by hurling stones at them. Hence their dead bodies are compared to *straw that is eaten up*.

[1] The meaning is that Divine protection of the Kaba and destruction of its enemies was a special favour granted to the Quraish, for it led to their protection. Being guardians of the Kaba, they were respected when they set out on their trade journeys to Syria in the summer and to Yemen in the winter

[2] The pilgrimage gave a special impetus to their trade and the necessaries of life were brought to their very doors, while they were totally secure from all fear of attack, to which the other Arab tribes were constantly exposed, because the territory around Kaba was held sacred by the whole of Arabia

[3] *Dīn* signifies both *religion* and *judgment*. The essence of religion is here described to be the taking care of the orphan and feeding the poor. Even the prayer of those is condemned who withhold alms because the object of prayer is the perfection of self, and no one can be said to have attained perfection who does not serve the cause of humanity.

CHAPTER 108

AL-KAUSAR : ABUNDANT GOOD

(*Mecca—3 verses*)

THIS is one of the earliest of revelations, and promises abundance of good of every kind (whence the name) to the Holy Prophet, while it shows that his enemies shall be deprived even of that good which was given to them as a favour in this life.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 We have given thee abundance of good,[1] 2 Therefore
pray to thy Lord and make a sacrifice. 3 Thy enemy—he
is the one cut off (from good).

CHAPTER 109

AL-KÂFIRÛN : THE UNBELIEVERS

(*Mecca—6 verses*)

THE *Unbelievers* (hence the title) are told in this chapter that they shall be requited for their misdeeds, while the Prophet shall reap the reward of his deeds.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: O unbelievers! 2 I do not serve that which
you serve, 3 Nor are you servers of Him whom I serve:
4 Nor was I (ever) a server of that which you served.[2]
5 Nor are you servers of Him whom I serve. 6 You shall
have your recompense and I shall have my recompense.

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[1] *Al-kausar* signifies *abundance*, specially *of good*, and according to Razi includes *the good of this life and the good of the hereafter*. The existence in paradise of a river of this name, from which all other rivers flow, only shows that the *abundant good* granted to the Holy Prophet is such that others will also draw their good from him. It is related that Ibn-i-Abbas explained *kausar* as meaning *abundant good*, and when it was said to him that people say it is a river in paradise, he replied: "That too is of the abundant good."

[2] While the 3rd and 5th verses are in identical words showing that the unbelievers did not really worship God, the 2nd and 4th verses differ from each other, the second verse referring to the present and the fourth to the past, the latter showing that the Holy Prophet never worshipped idols. There is also historical testimony to the effect that when quite a child and accompanying his uncle in his journey to Syria, the Holy Prophet expressed strong hatred for idol-worship.

CHAPTER 110

AN-NASR : THE HELP

(*Mecca*—3 *verses*)

THIS chapter speaks of the great Divine *Help* and victory (from which it receives its title) with which the Holy Prophet's endeavours in the cause of truth were crowned. Ibn-i-Umar says that this chapter was revealed during the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet, and that he lived only eighty days after its revelation. Hence, though classed with the Medina revelation, it was actually revealed at Mecca. As a complete chapter it may be said to be the last revelation of the Holy Prophet, and, coming down at Mecca, it showed how the wonderful prophecies, announced in utter loneliness and helplessness at Mecca, were now fulfilled by the Prophet visiting that sacred city with over a hundred thousand followers.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When there comes the help of God and the victory,
2 And thou seest men entering the religion of God in
companies, 3 Celebrate the praise of thy Lord, and ask
His forgiveness ; for He is oft-returning (to mercy).[1]

CHAPTER 111

AL-LAHAB : THE FLAME

(*Mecca*—5 *verses*)

WHILE the last chapter speaks of the peaceful end of a righteous man, because he attains the great object of his life, the present chapter shows that the fiery-tempered opponents of truth lead their lives in heart-burning which assumes the palpable shape of *flames* of fire in another life. It is therefore entitled the *Flame*.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Perdition overtake both hands of the father of the
flame, and he will perish.[2] 2 His wealth and what he

[1] The tenth year of Hejira witnessed a mass movement towards Islam, tribe after tribe accepting the religion. The great and wonderful prophecies of the reformation of Arabia being thus clearly fulfilled, the Prophet was given to understand that the time had now come when he should prepare to meet the Lord. The *asking of forgiveness* was for the people who were now joining Islam, because on account of his approaching death, the Holy Prophet had no time to ground them well in faith.

[2] A man of a fiery temper may be called *abu-lahab* or *father of flame*. Abdul Uzza, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, was known by this name,

earns will not avail him. 3 He shall burn in fire that flames, 4 And his wife, the bearer of slander, 5 Upon her neck a halter of strongly twisted rope.[1]

CHAPTER 112

AL-IKHLÂS: THE UNITY

(*Mecca—4 verses*)

THIS is really the concluding chapter of the Holy Quran—the two chapters that follow only show how the protection of the Lord is to be sought—and it gives the sum and substance of the teachings of the Holy Quran, which is the declaration of the *Unity* of the Divine Being, the chapter receiving its title from that circumstance.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: He, God, is One. 2 God is He on Whom all depend. 3 He begets not, nor is He begotten; 4 And none is like Him.[2]

CHAPTER 113

AL-FALAQ: THE DAWN

(*Mecca—5 verses*)

THIS chapter and the one that follows teach man how to seek refuge in God and how to betake himself to His protection. This subject being referred to in Meccan revelations, as in ch. 16 and 41,

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perhaps on account of his severe opposition to the Holy Prophet. It is related that the Holy Prophet, being commanded to warn his near relatives, called them together and delivered the Divine message, at which Abdul Uzza cried out: "May you perish! was it for this that you summoned us?" It is also related that he followed the Prophet when he went forth to preach, saying to the people that the Prophet was a mad relative of his. He is related to have died seven days after hearing of the defeat of the Meccans at Badr.

[1] Abu Lahab's wife was Umm-i-Jameela, the sister of Abu Sufyan. She *used to spread evil reports* against the Holy Prophet. The halter of strongly twisted rope represents a punishment corresponding to sin, for it is related that she used to gather thorns bound with a rope, which she brought on her own head to spread in the Prophet's way, and she died, being strangled by that rope.

[2] *Shirk*, or the setting up of equals with the Divine Being, is of four kinds, viz. a belief in the plurality of gods, a belief that other things may possess the perfect attributes of the Divine Being, a belief that any thing may be related to him, and a belief that others may do what is ascribable only to the Divine Being. These four kinds of *shirk* are rejected in the first, second, third and fourth verses respectively.

the two chapters must have been revealed at Mecca, and they are amongst the earliest Meccan revelations according to Rodwell, who considers them to be the sixth and seventh respectively in order of revelation. The many stories regarding their Medina origin, as stated by some commentators, are not to be found in any authentic report, and consequently such stories must be rejected. Thus the Quran opens with the seeking of assistance from the Divine Being in *Bismillah*, and ends with the seeking of refuge in Him in these two chapters.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, 2 From
the evil of what He has created, 3 And from the evil of
the utterly dark night when it comes, 4 And from the
evil of those who cast (evil suggestions) in firm resolutions,
5 And from the evil of the envious when he envies.[1]

CHAPTER 114

AN-NÅS: THE MEN

(*Mecca*—6 *verses*)

THE introductory note on the last chapter may also be read here.

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men, 2 The King
of men, 3 The God of men, 4 From the evil of the whis-
perings of the slinking (devil), 5 Who whispers into the
hearts of men, 6 From among the jinn and the men.[2]

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[1] The *dark night* of v. 3 stands for the difficulties through which a man is unable to see his way; the *Naffását* of v. 4 are those who would mislead others by their evil suggestions, when they set to work; while the 5th verse tells us that when success attends a man's efforts, there are those who envy that success, and therefore at all stages of an affair man stands in need of seeking Divine protection. It should be noted that *naffását* is from *nafs* which signifies the putting a thing into the heart or an evil suggestion, and *'uqad* is the plural of *'uqdah*, which means *the regulating of one's affair* or one's resolution.

[2] These verses are, as it were, a complement to the previous chapter. Three kinds of mischief are pointed out there which may be done to the cause of truth. Here a fourth, but the gravest mischief of all, is pointed out. This is the mischief of the slinking devil who comes stealthily and casts evil suggestions into the hearts of men. The whispering of the evil one is the greatest mischief because its source is in the hearts of men.

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